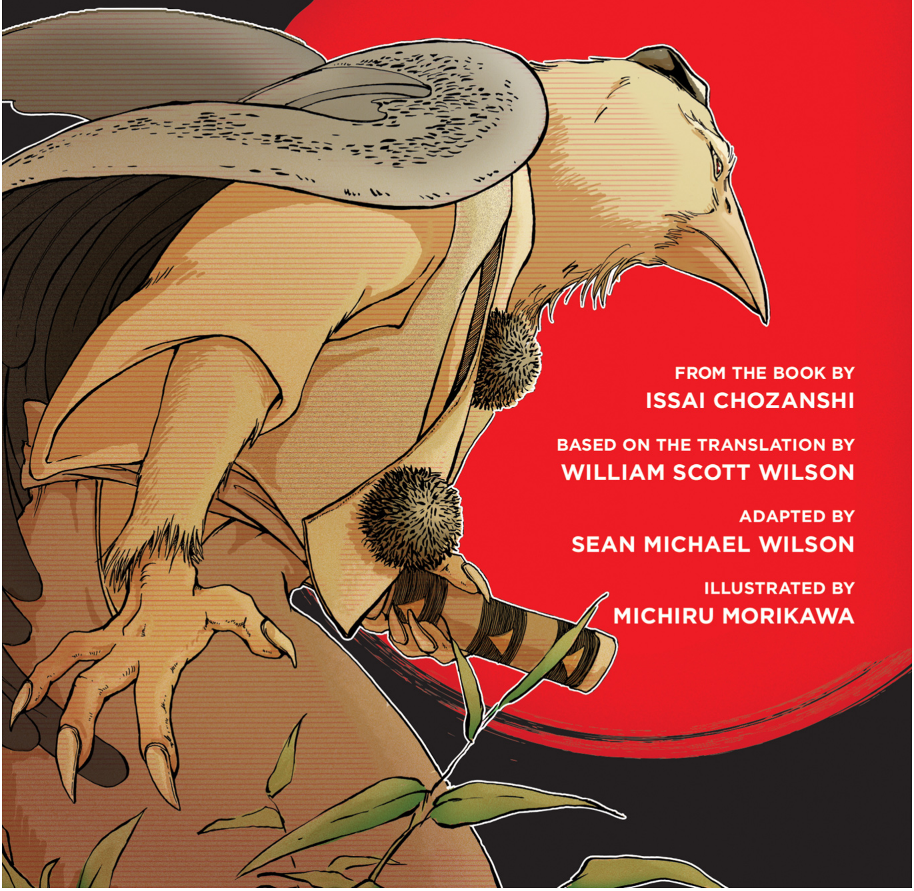
THE DEMON'S SERMON ON THE MARTIAL ARTS

A GRAPHIC NOVEL



FROM THE BOOK BY
ISSAI CHOZANSHI

BASED ON THE TRANSLATION BY
WILLIAM SCOTT WILSON

ADAPTED BY
SEAN MICHAEL WILSON

ILLUSTRATED BY
MICHIRU MORIKAWA

THE DEMON'S SERMON ON THE MARTIAL ARTS

A Graphic Novel

From the book by Issai Chozanshi

Based on the translation by William Scott Wilson

Adapted by Sean Michael Wilson

Illustrated by Michiru Morikawa

With an afterword by William Scott Wilson

SHAMBHALA
Boston & London
2013

Based on *The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts* by Issai Chozanshi, translated by William Scott Wilson, © 2006, published by Shambhala Publications.

Shambhala Publications, Inc.
Horticultural Hall
300 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
www.shambhala.com

© 2013 by Sean Michael Wilson
Illustrations © 2013 by Michiru Morikawa
Afterword © 2013 by William Scott Wilson

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wilson, Sean Michael.
[Tengu geijutsuron. English]
The demon's sermon on the martial arts: a graphic novel / from the book by Issai Chozanshi; based on the translation by William Scott Wilson; adapted by Sean Michael Wilson; illustrated by Michiru Morikawa. —1st ed.
p. cm.
eISBN 978-0-8348-4195-6
ISBN 978-1-61180-021-0 (pbk.: alk. paper)
1. Military art and science—Japan—Early works to 1800—Comic books, strips, etc. 2. Kendo—Philosophy—Early works to 1800—Comic books, strips, etc. 3. Military art and science—Philosophy—Early works to 1800—Comic books, strips, etc. 4. Martial arts—Philosophy—Early works to 1800—Comic books, strips, etc. 5. Graphic novels. I. Wilson, William Scott, 1944– II. Morikawa, Michiru, 1973– III. Niwa, Chozan, fl. 1716–1735 Tengu geijutsuron. English IV. Title.
U43.J3N58135 2013
741.5'973—DC23
2012037079

THE DEMON'S SERMON ON THE MARTIAL ARTS

THE DEMON'S SERMON: PART 1
Transformation of the Sparrow and the Butterfly
Meeting the Gods of Poverty in a Dream

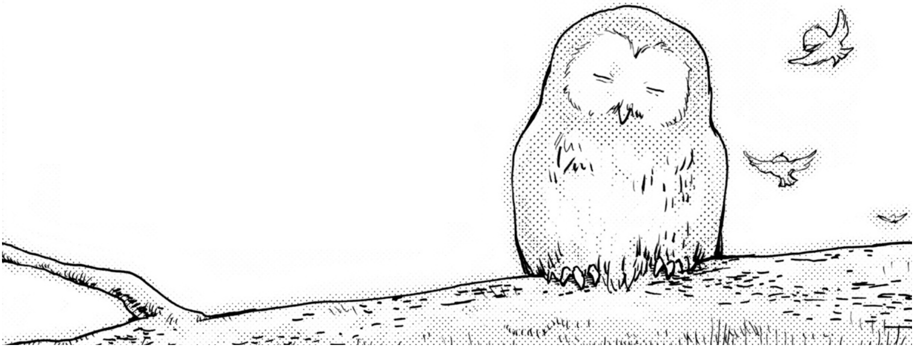
THE DEMON'S SERMON: PART 2
The Greatest Joys of the Cicada and Its Cast-Off Shell
The Owl's Understanding

THE DEMON'S SERMON: PART 3
The Centipede Questions the Snake

THE DEMON'S SERMON: PART 4
The Toad's Way of the Gods
The Mysterious Technique of the Cat

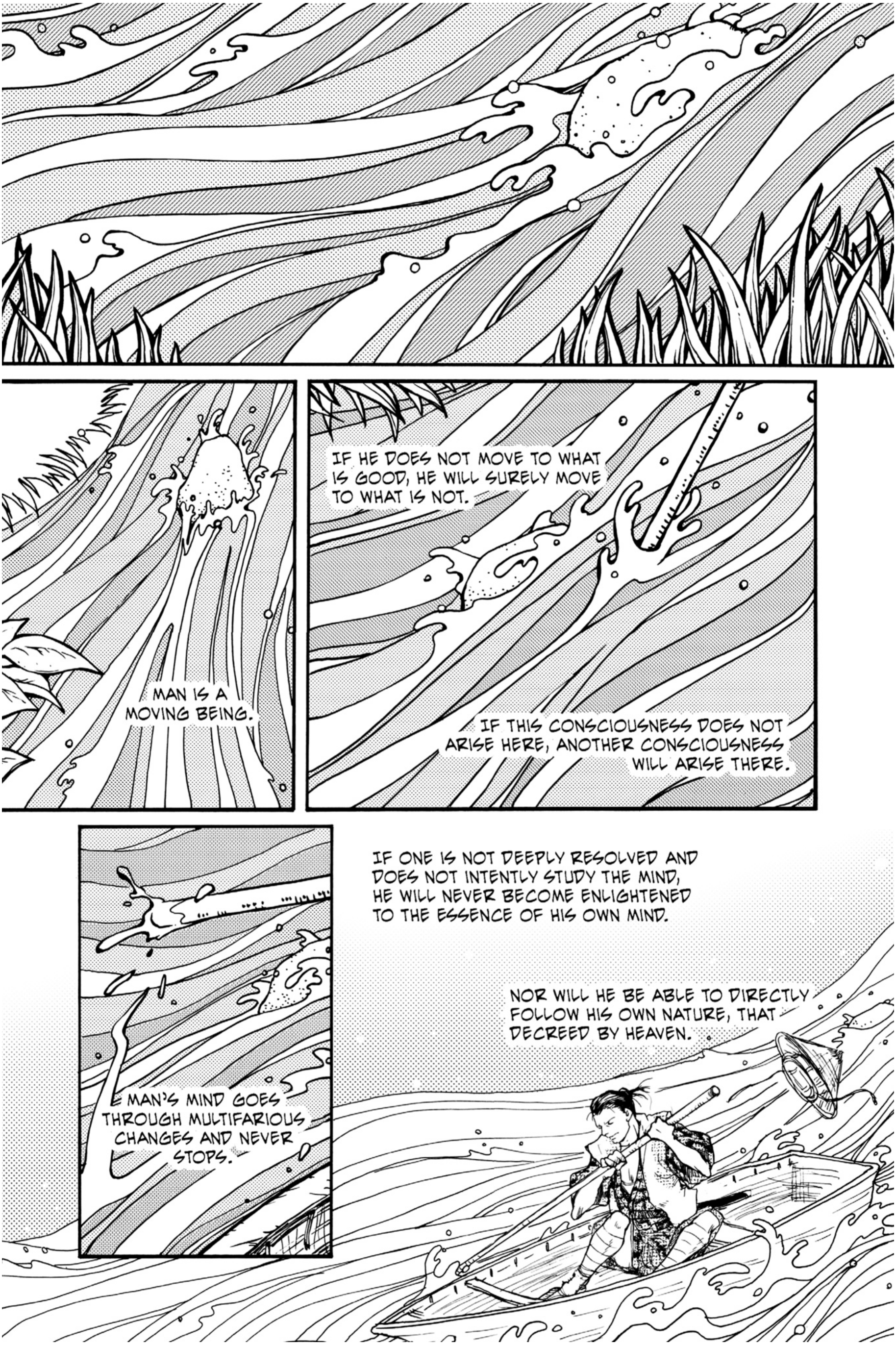
THE DEMON'S SERMON: PART 5

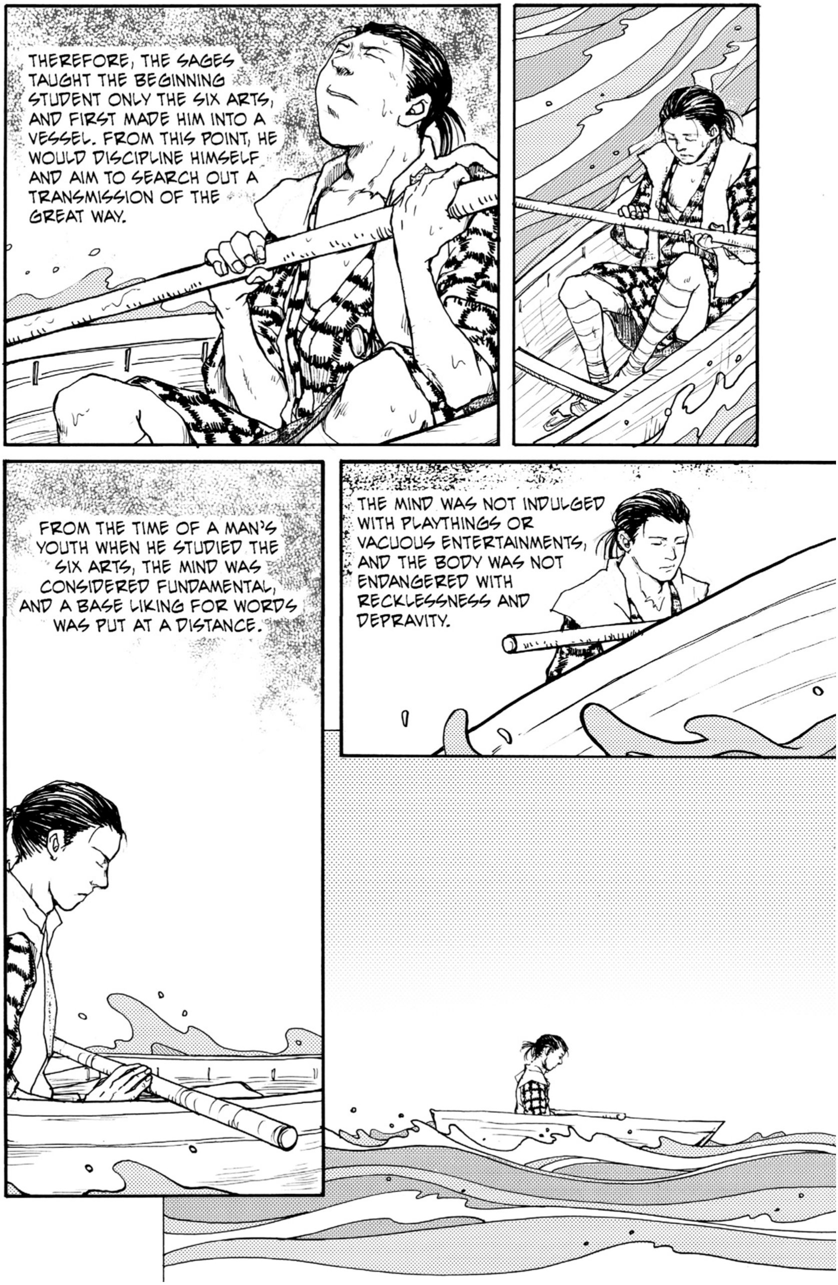
Afterword by William Scott Wilson

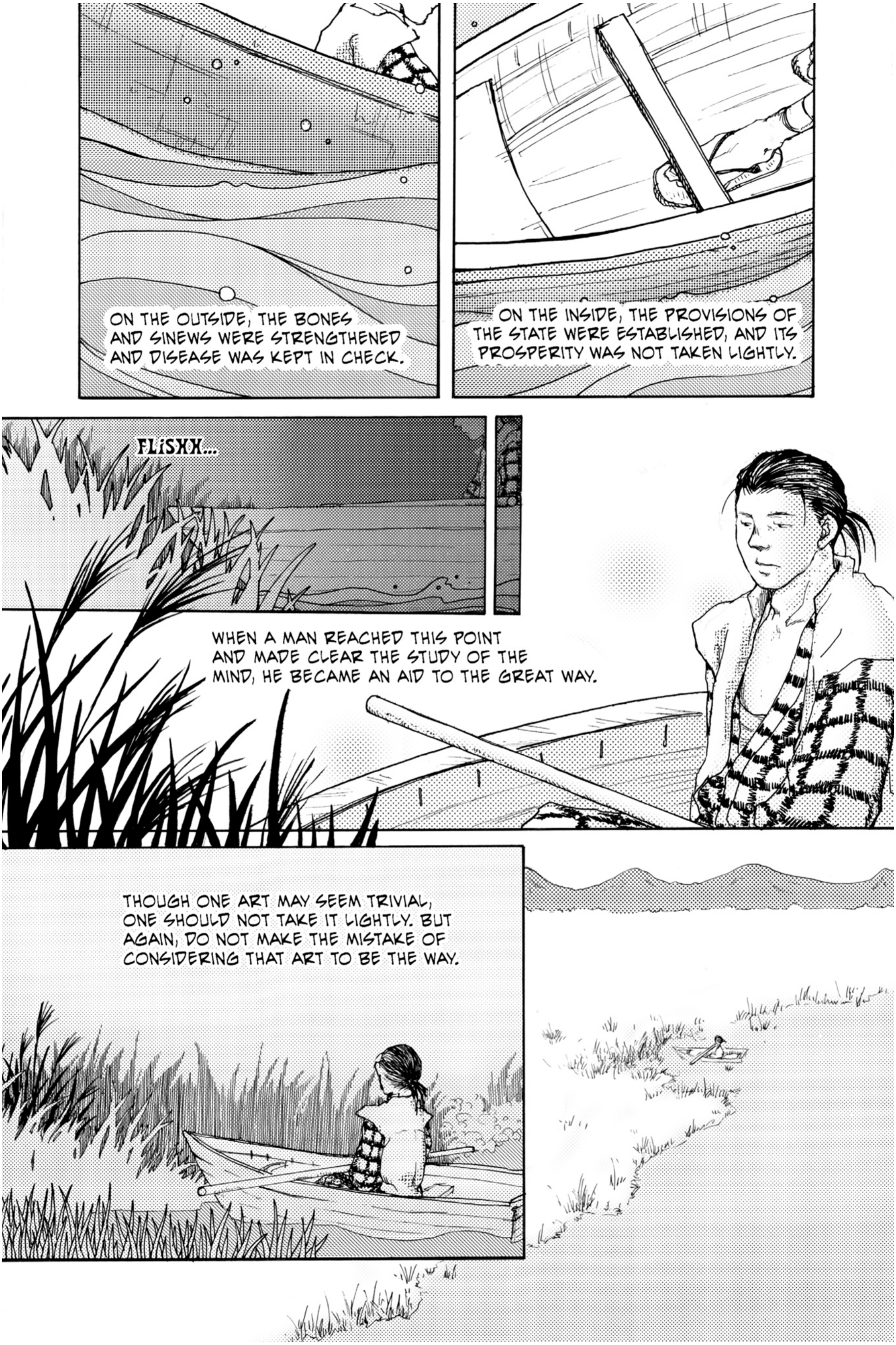


THE DEMON'S SERMON

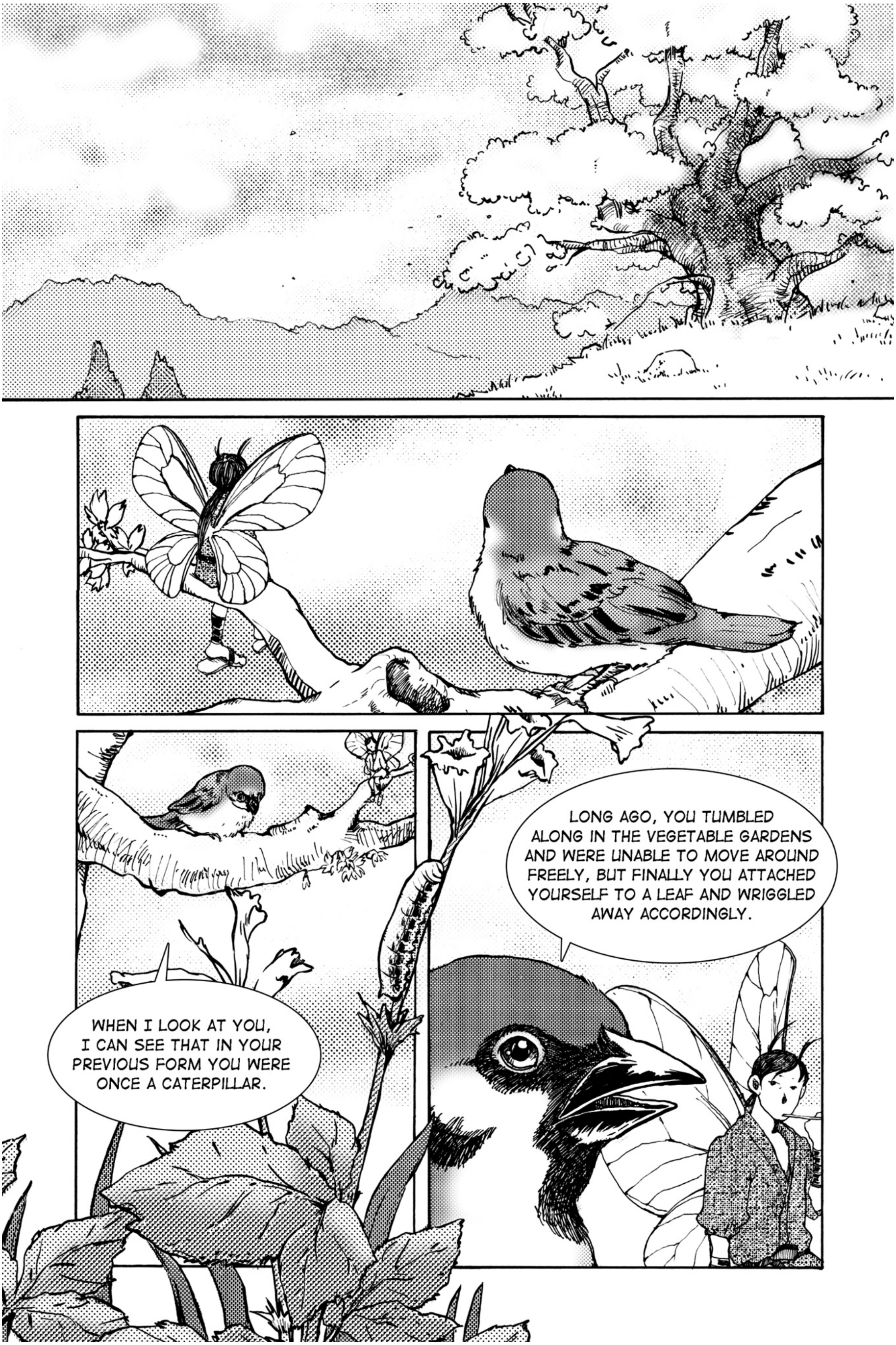
PART 1

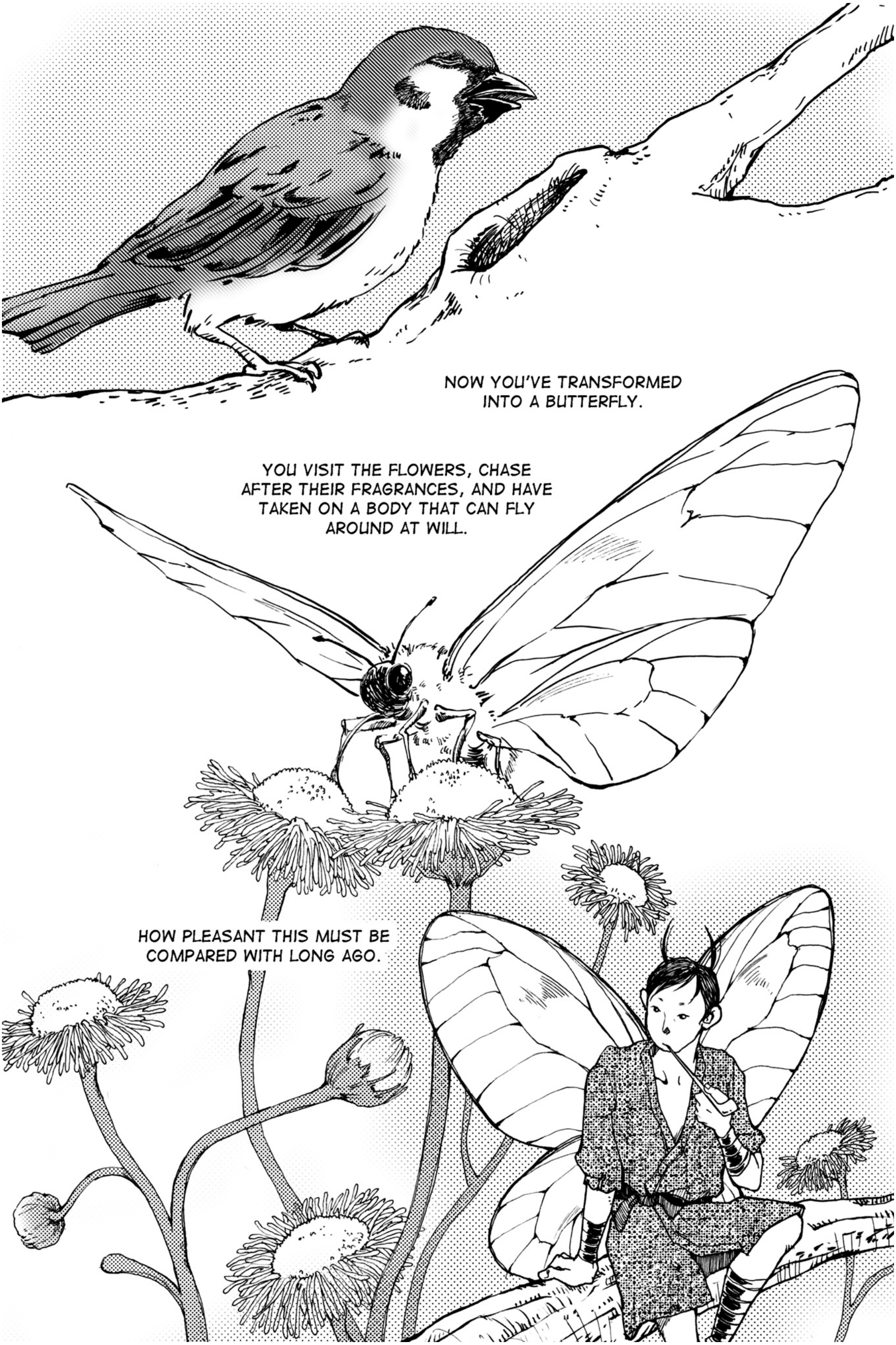

MAN IS A MOVING BEING.
IF HE DOES NOT MOVE TO WHAT IS GOOD, HE WILL SURELY MOVE TO WHAT IS NOT.
IF THIS CONSCIOUSNESS DOES NOT ARISE HERE, ANOTHER CONSCIOUSNESS WILL ARISE THERE.
MAN'S MIND GOES THROUGH MULTIFARIOUS CHANGES AND NEVER STOPS.
IF ONE IS NOT DEEPLY RESOLVED AND DOES NOT INTENTLY STUDY THE MIND, HE WILL NEVER BECOME ENLIGHTENED TO THE ESSENCE OF HIS OWN MIND.
NOR WILL HE BE ABLE TO DIRECTLY FOLLOW HIS OWN NATURE, THAT DECREED BY HEAVEN.

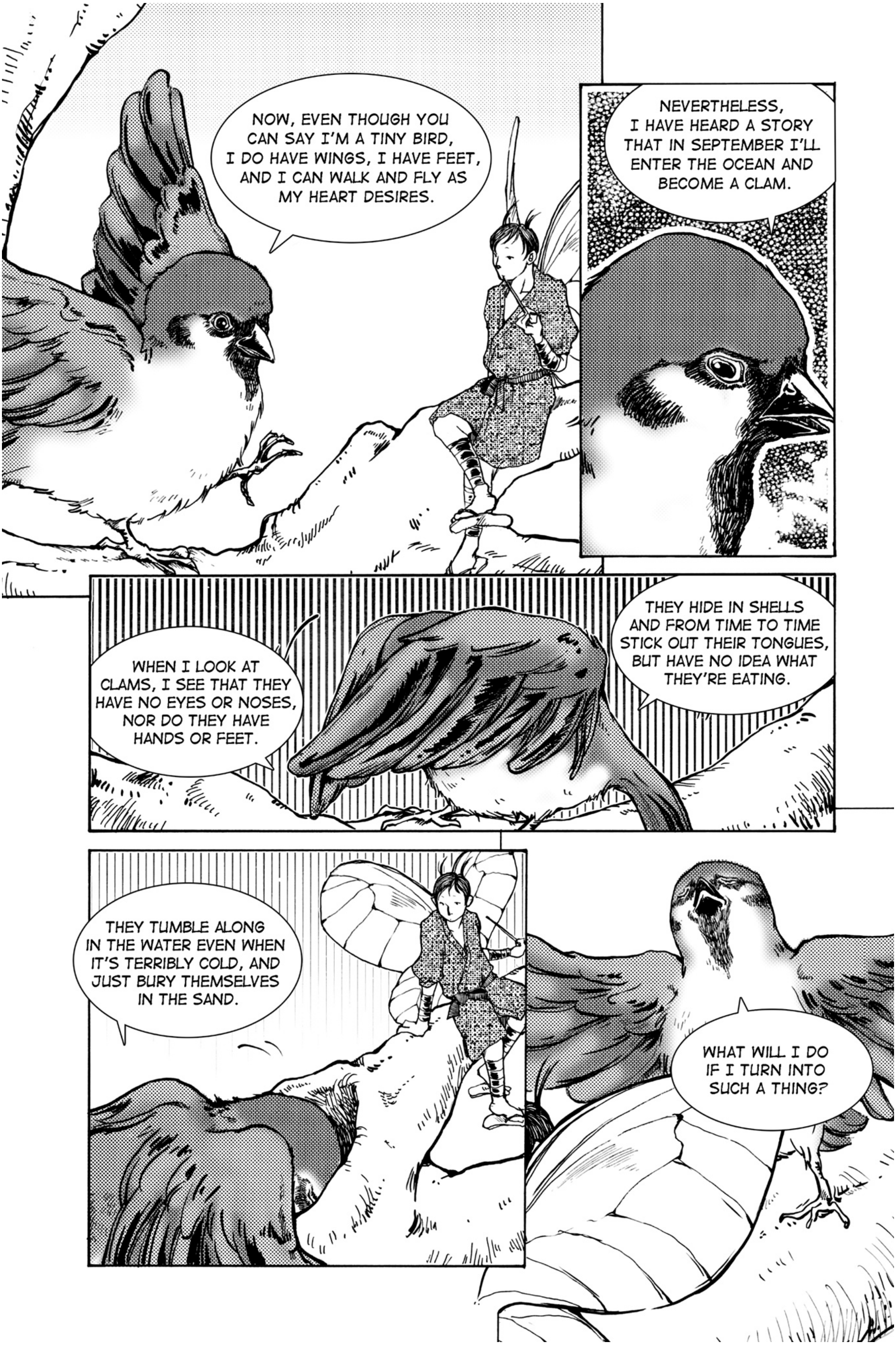

THEREFORE, THE SAGES TAUGHT THE BEGINNING STUDENT ONLY THE SIX ARTS, AND FIRST MADE HIM INTO A VESSEL. FROM THIS POINT, HE WOULD DISCIPLINE HIMSELF AND AIM TO SEARCH OUT A TRANSMISSION OF THE GREAT WAY.
FROM THE TIME OF A MAN'S YOUTH WHEN HE STUDIED THE SIX ARTS, THE MIND WAS CONSIDERED FUNDAMENTAL, AND A BASE LIKING FOR WORDS WAS PUT AT A DISTANCE.
THE MIND WAS NOT INDULGED WITH PLAYTHINGS OR VACUOUS ENTERTAINMENTS, AND THE BODY WAS NOT ENDANGERED WITH RECKLESSNESS AND DEPRAVITY.

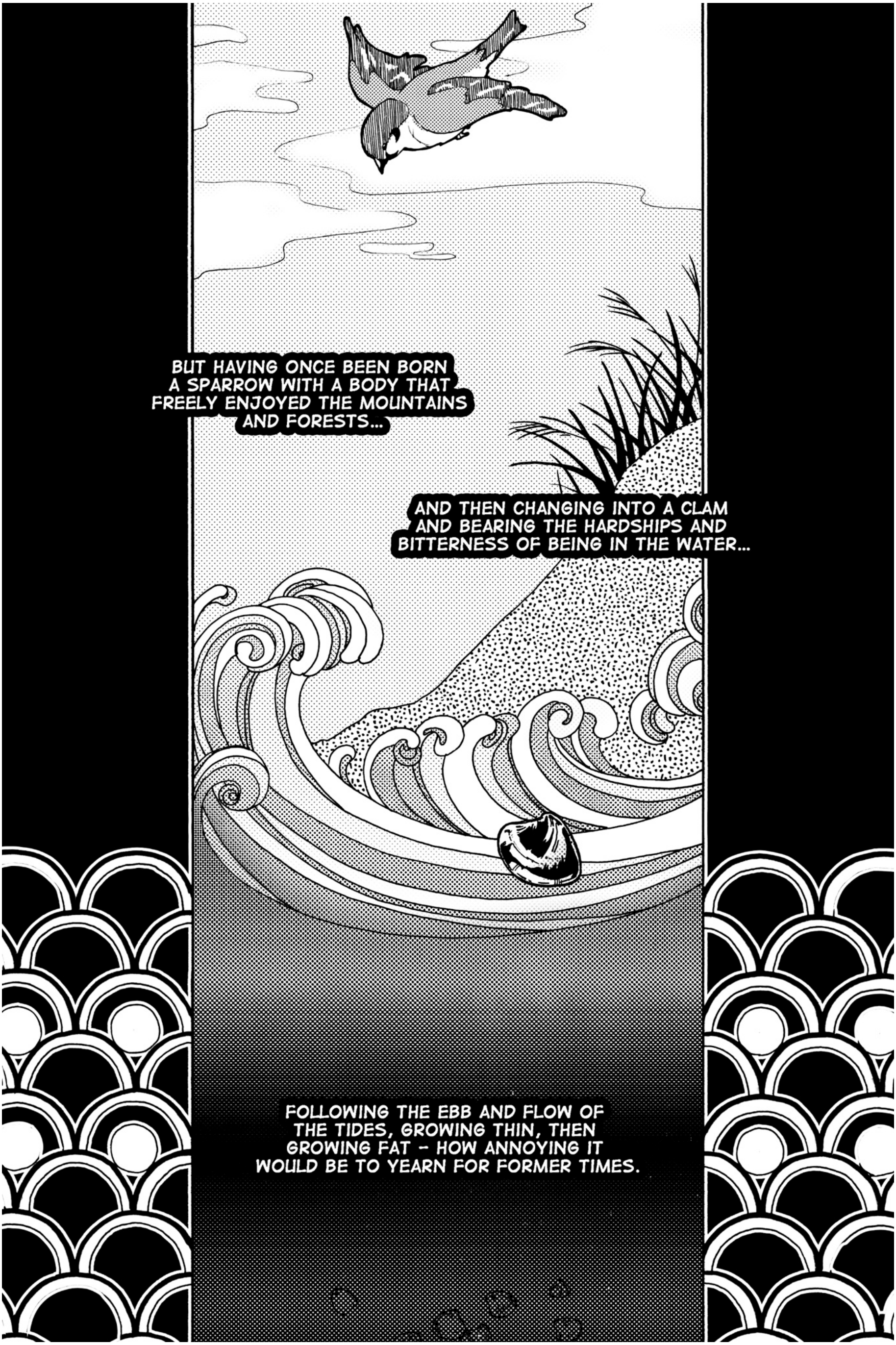

ON THE OUTSIDE, THE BONES AND SINEWS WERE STRENGTHENED AND DISEASE WAS KEPT IN CHECK.
ON THE INSIDE, THE PROVISIONS OF THE STATE WERE ESTABLISHED, AND ITS PROSPERITY WAS NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY.
FLISHH...
WHEN A MAN REACHED THIS POINT AND MADE CLEAR THE STUDY OF THE MIND, HE BECAME AN AID TO THE GREAT WAY.
THOUGH ONE ART MAY SEEM TRIVIAL, ONE SHOULD NOT TAKE IT LIGHTLY. BUT AGAIN, DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF CONSIDERING THAT ART TO BE THE WAY.

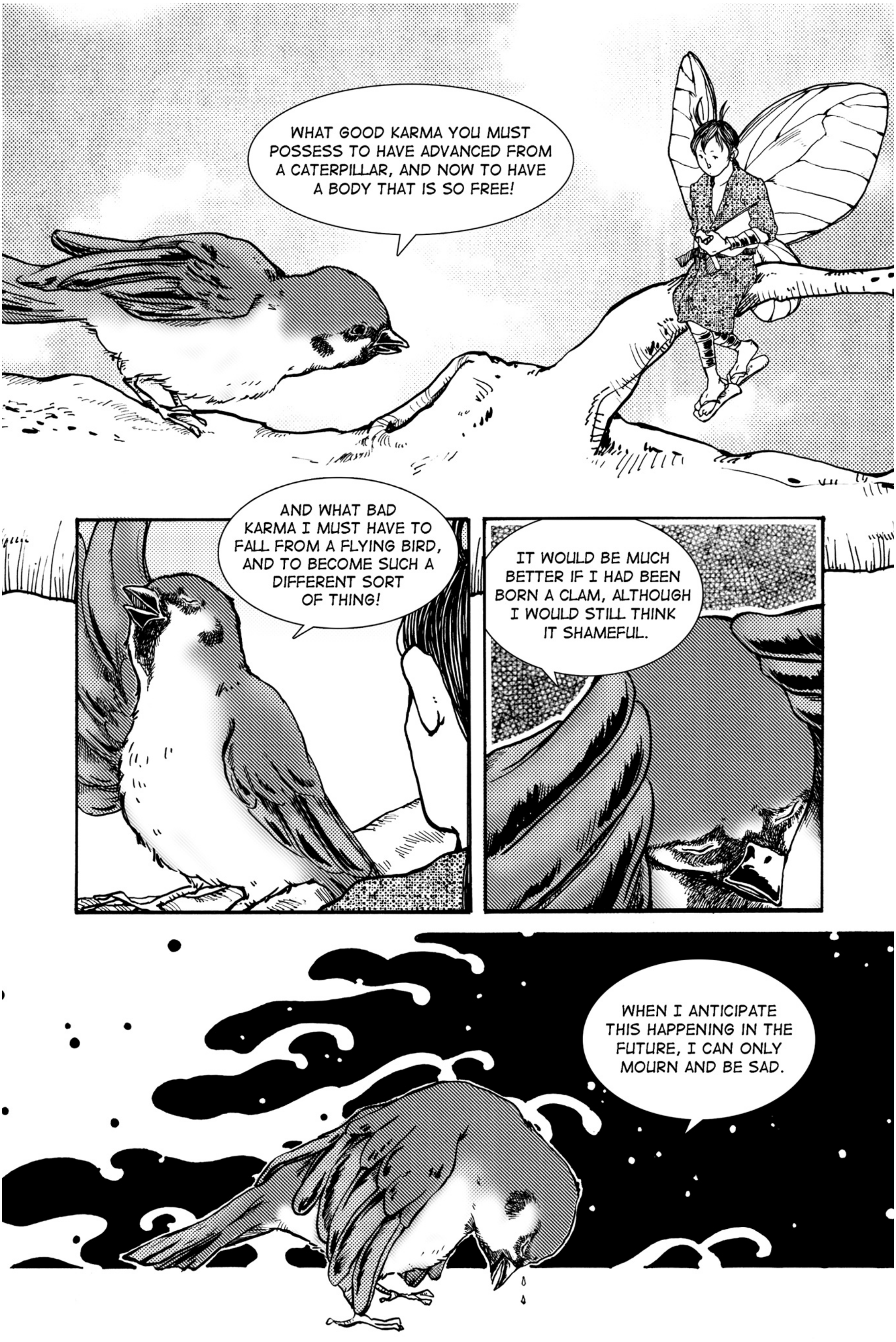
TRANSFORMATION OF THE SPARROW AND THE BUTTERFLY

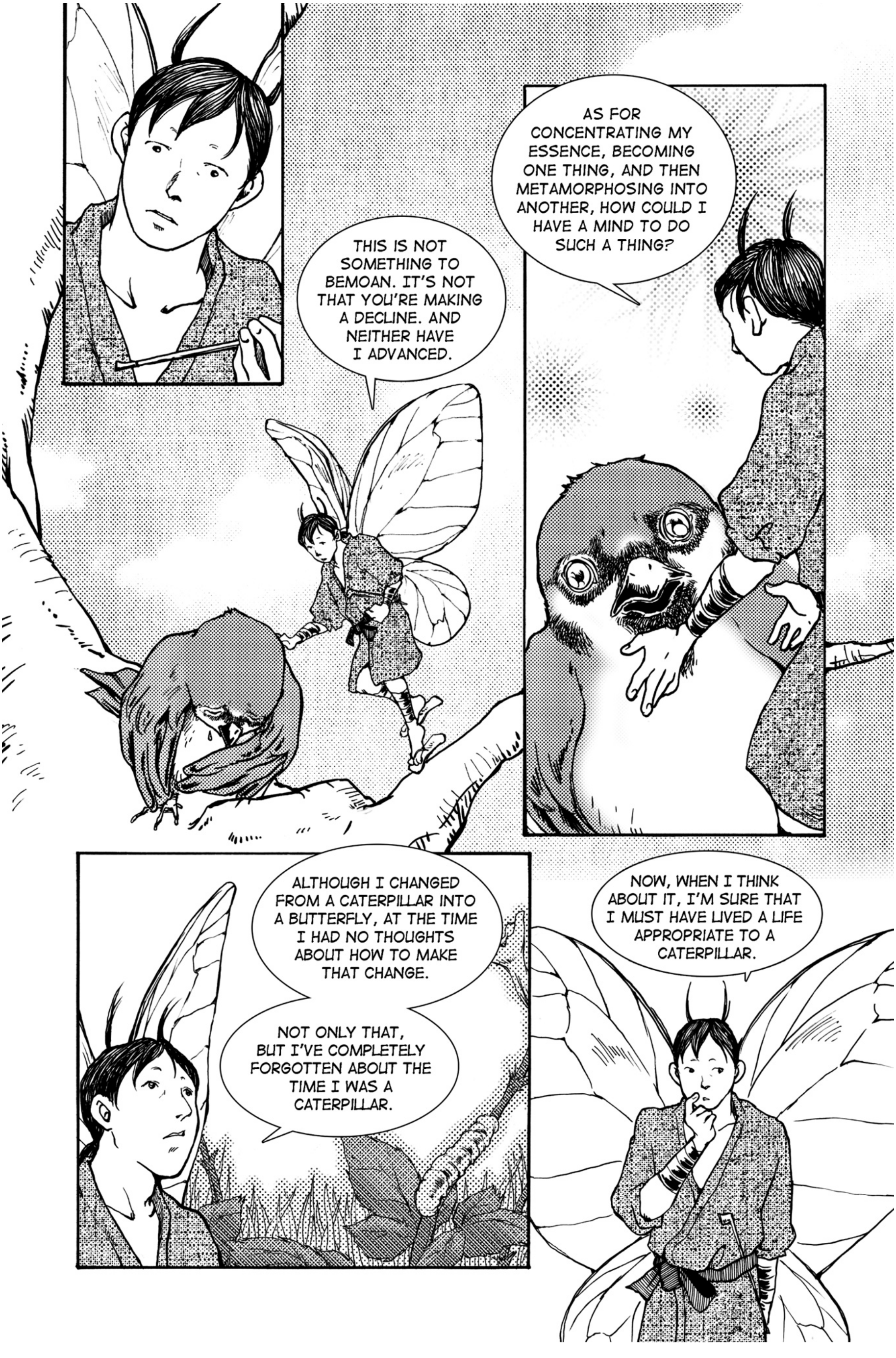

WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I CAN SEE THAT IN YOUR PREVIOUS FORM YOU WERE ONCE A CATERPILLAR.
LONG AGO, YOU TUMBLED ALONG IN THE VEGETABLE GARDENS AND WERE UNABLE TO MOVE AROUND FREELY, BUT FINALLY YOU ATTACHED YOURSELF TO A LEAF AND WRIGGLED AWAY ACCORDINGLY.

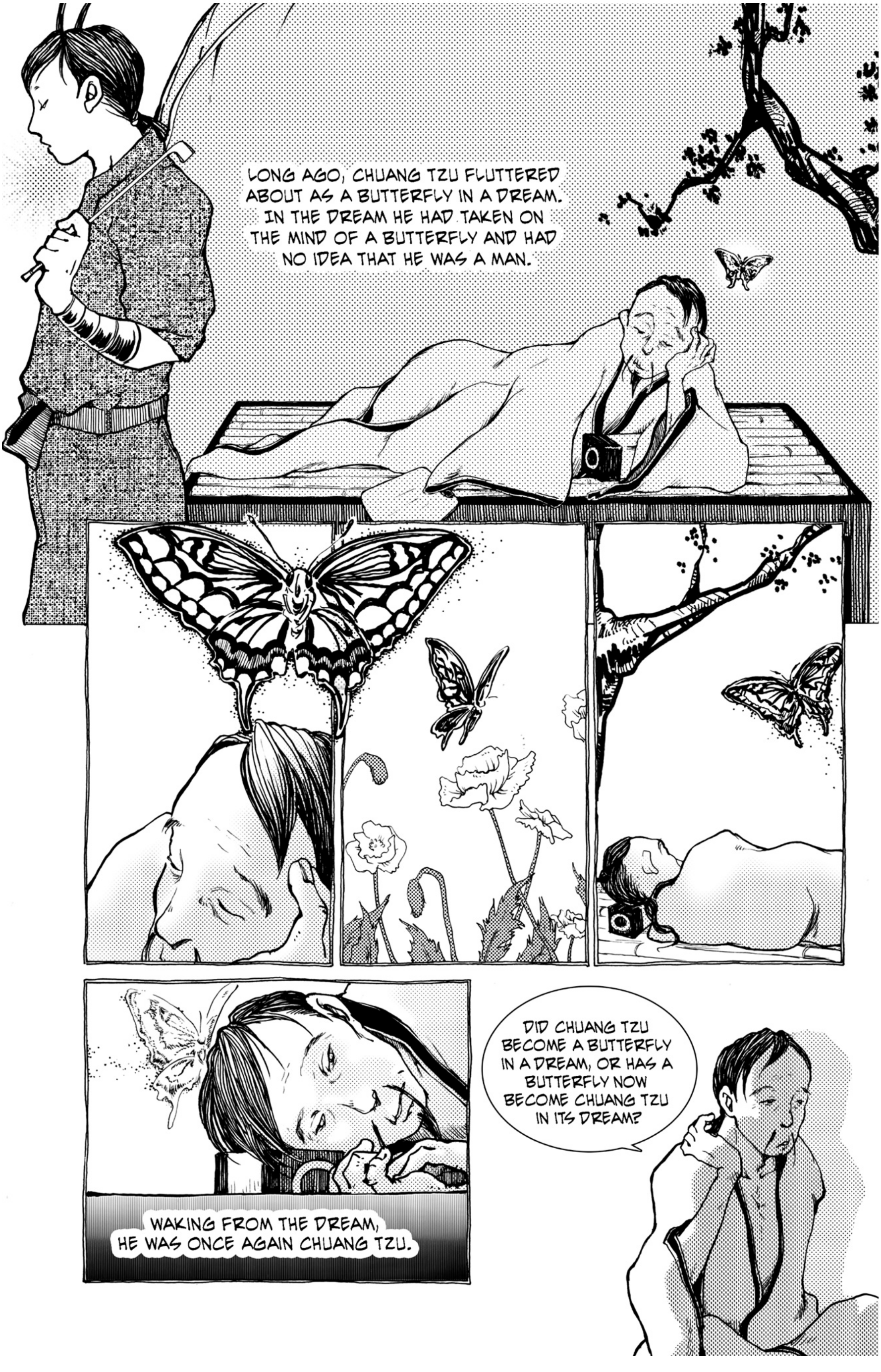

NOW YOU'VE TRANSFORMED INTO A BUTTERFLY.
YOU VISIT THE FLOWERS, CHASE AFTER THEIR FRAGRANCES, AND HAVE TAKEN ON A BODY THAT CAN FLY AROUND AT WILL.
HOW PLEASANT THIS MUST BE COMPARED WITH LONG AGO.

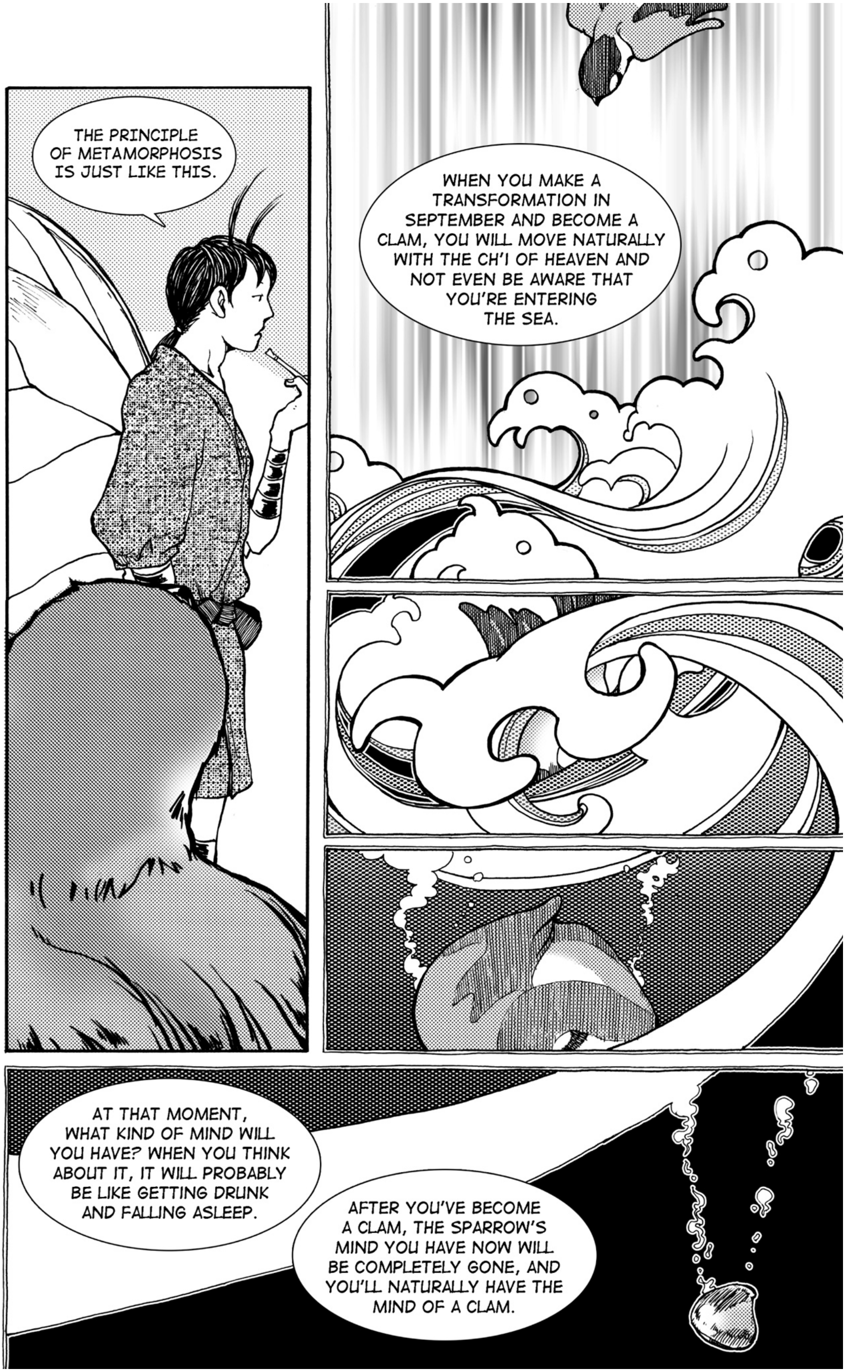

NOW, EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN SAY I'M A TINY BIRD, I DO HAVE WINGS, I HAVE FEET, AND I CAN WALK AND FLY AS MY HEART DESIRES.
NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE HEARD A STORY THAT IN SEPTEMBER I'LL ENTER THE OCEAN AND BECOME A CLAM.
WHEN I LOOK AT CLAMS, I SEE THAT THEY HAVE NO EYES OR NOSES, NOR DO THEY HAVE HANDS OR FEET.
THEY HIDE IN SHELLS AND FROM TIME TO TIME STICK OUT THEIR TONGUES, BUT HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE EATING.
THEY TUMBLE ALONG IN THE WATER EVEN WHEN IT'S TERRIBLY COLD, AND JUST BURY THEMSELVES IN THE SAND.
WHAT WILL I DO IF I TURN INTO SUCH A THING?

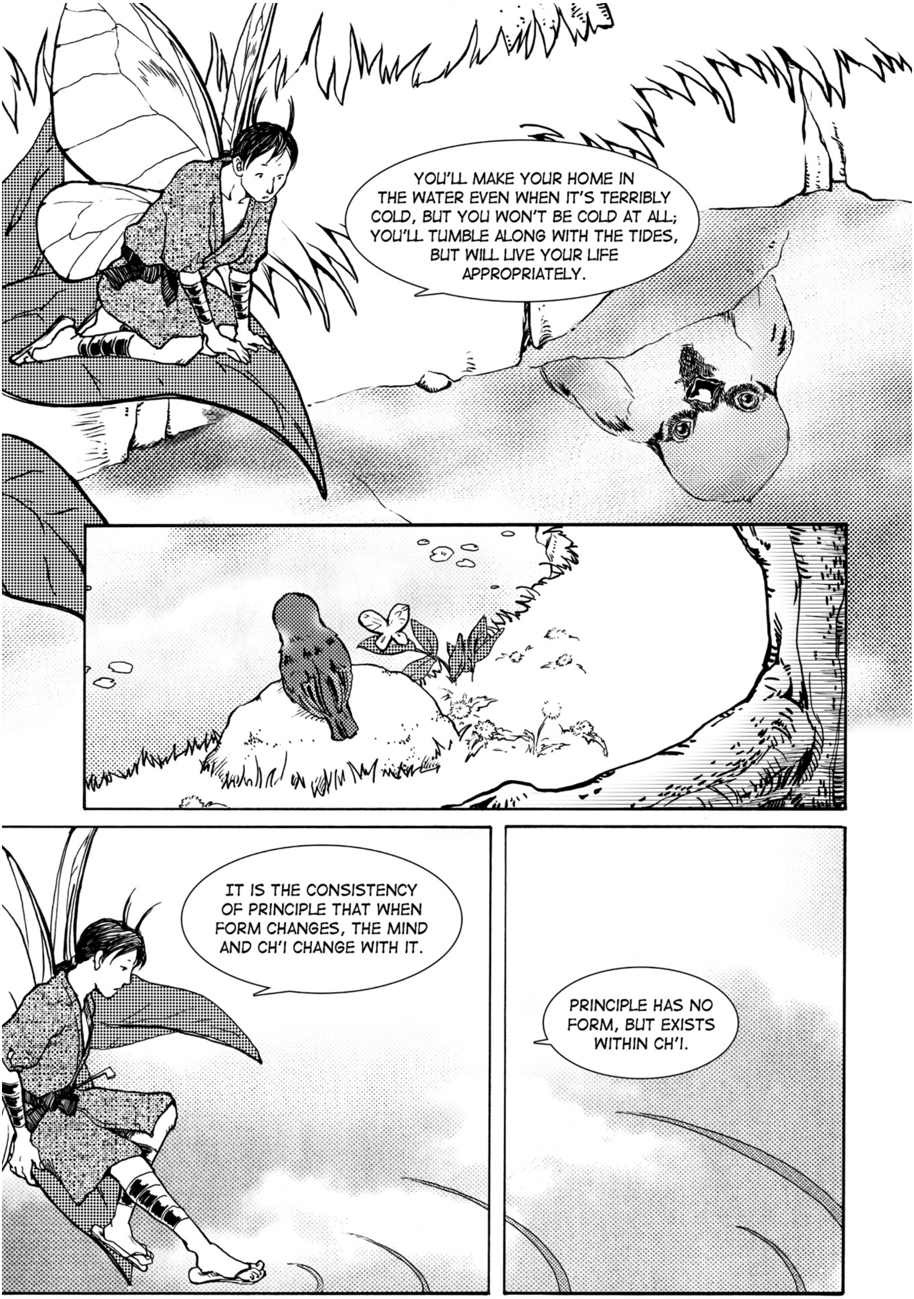

BUT HAVING ONCE BEEN BORN A SPARROW WITH A BODY THAT FREELY ENJOYED THE MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS...
AND THEN CHANGING INTO A CLAM AND BEARING THE HARDSHIPS AND BITTERNESS OF BEING IN THE WATER...
FOLLOWING THE EBB AND FLOW OF THE TIDES, GROWING THIN, THEN GROWING FAT - HOW ANNOYING IT WOULD BE TO YEARN FOR FORMER TIMES.

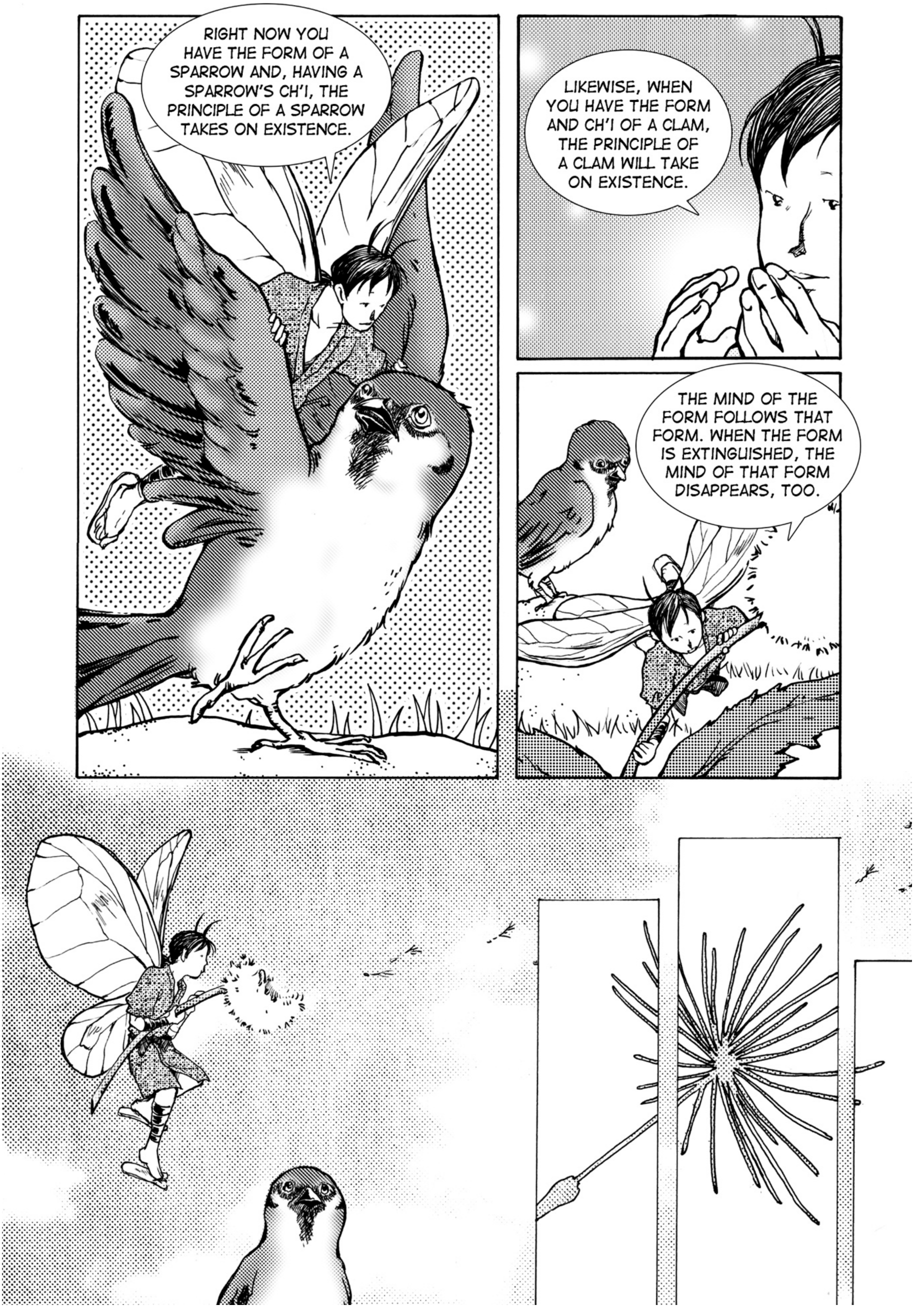

WHAT GOOD KARMA YOU MUST POSSESS TO HAVE ADVANCED FROM A CATERPILLAR, AND NOW TO HAVE A BODY THAT IS SO FREE!
AND WHAT BAD KARMA I MUST HAVE TO FALL FROM A FLYING BIRD, AND TO BECOME SUCH A DIFFERENT SORT OF THING!
IT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER IF I HAD BEEN BORN A CLAM, ALTHOUGH I WOULD STILL THINK IT SHAMEFUL.
WHEN I ANTICIPATE THIS HAPPENING IN THE FUTURE, I CAN ONLY MOURN AND BE SAD.

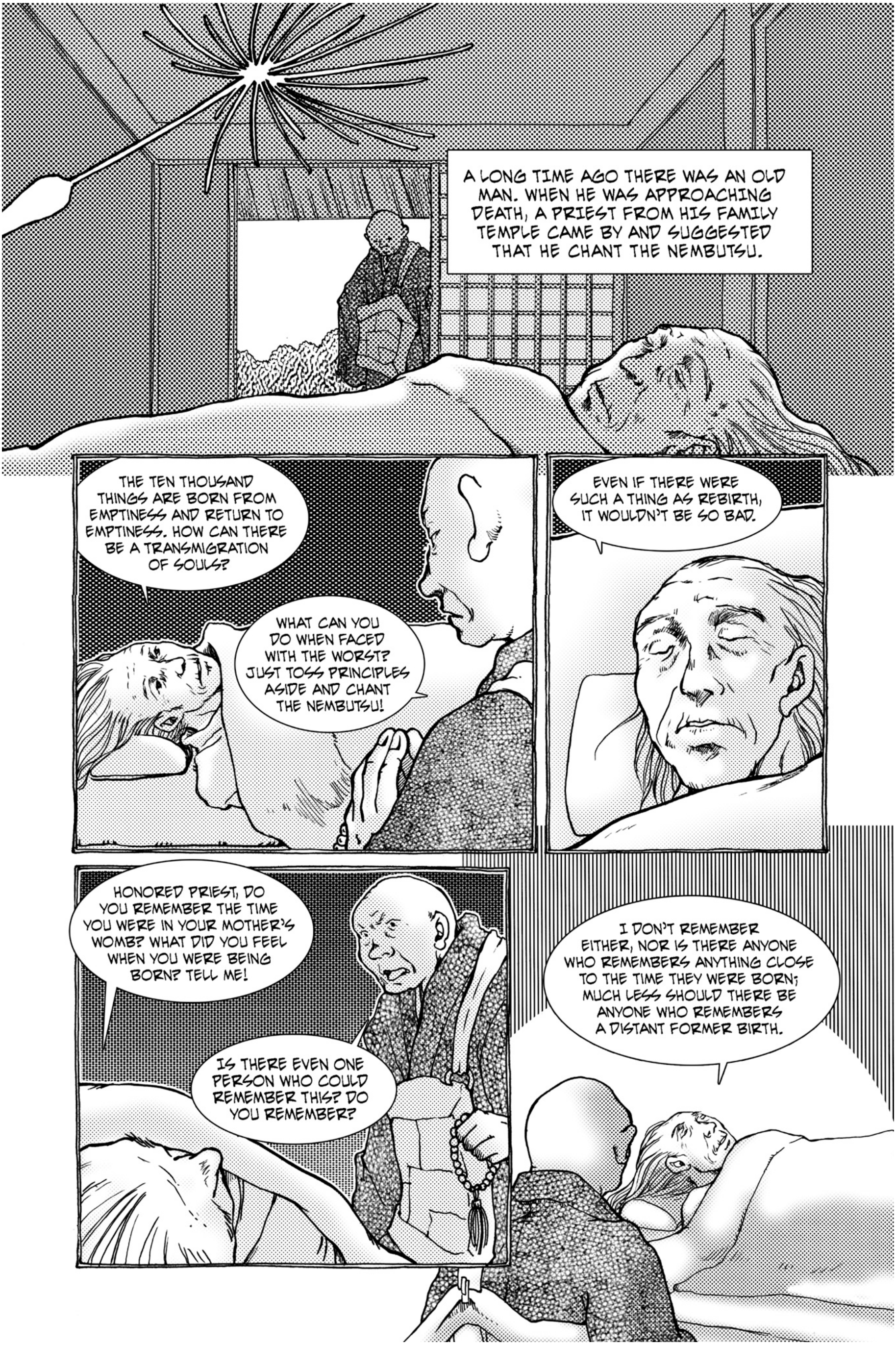

THIS IS NOT SOMETHING TO BEMOAN. IT'S NOT THAT YOU'RE MAKING A DECLINE. AND NEITHER HAVE I ADVANCED.
AS FOR CONCENTRATING MY ESSENCE, BECOMING ONE THING, AND THEN METAMORPHOSING INTO ANOTHER, HOW COULD I HAVE A MIND TO DO SUCH A THING?
ALTHOUGH I CHANGED FROM A CATERPILLAR INTO A BUTTERFLY, AT THE TIME I HAD NO THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW TO MAKE THAT CHANGE.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT I'VE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE TIME I WAS A CATERPILLAR.
NOW, WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, I'M SURE THAT I MUST HAVE LIVED A LIFE APPROPRIATE TO A CATERPILLAR.

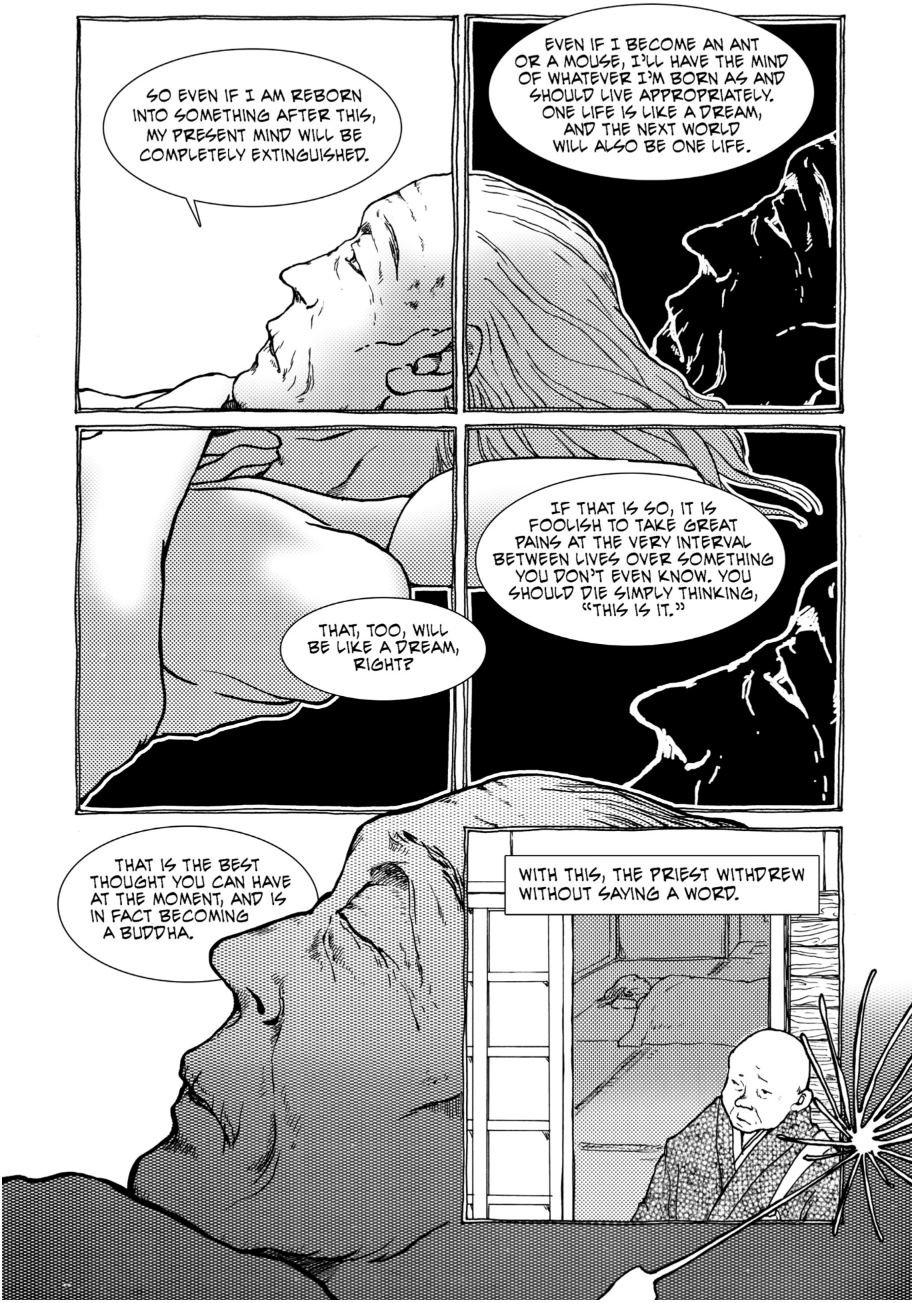

LONG AGO, CHUANG TZU FLUTTERED ABOUT AS A BUTTERFLY IN A DREAM. IN THE DREAM HE HAD TAKEN ON THE MIND OF A BUTTERFLY AND HAD NO IDEA THAT HE WAS A MAN.
WAKING FROM THE DREAM, HE WAS ONCE AGAIN CHUANG TZU.
DID CHUANG TZU BECOME A BUTTERFLY IN A DREAM, OR HAS A BUTTERFLY NOW BECOME CHUANG TZU IN ITS DREAM?

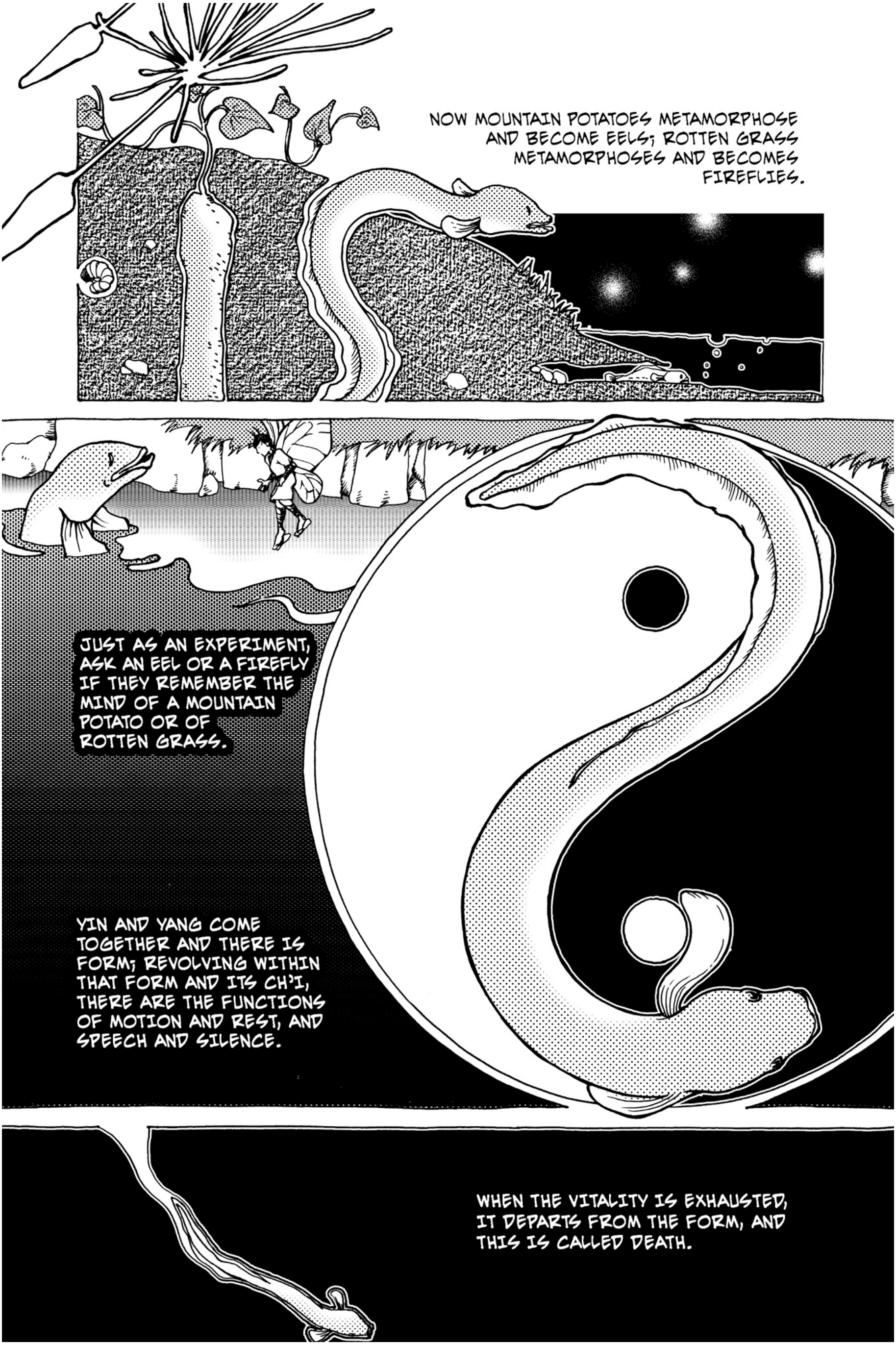

THE PRINCIPLE OF METAMORPHOSIS IS JUST LIKE THIS.
WHEN YOU MAKE A TRANSFORMATION IN SEPTEMBER AND BECOME A CLAM, YOU WILL MOVE NATURALLY WITH THE CH'I OF HEAVEN AND NOT EVEN BE AWARE THAT YOU'RE ENTERING THE SEA.
AT THAT MOMENT, WHAT KIND OF MIND WILL YOU HAVE? WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT WILL PROBABLY BE LIKE GETTING DRUNK AND FALLING ASLEEP.
AFTER YOU'VE BECOME A CLAM, THE SPARROW'S MIND YOU HAVE NOW WILL BE COMPLETELY GONE, AND YOU'LL NATURALLY HAVE THE MIND OF A CLAM.

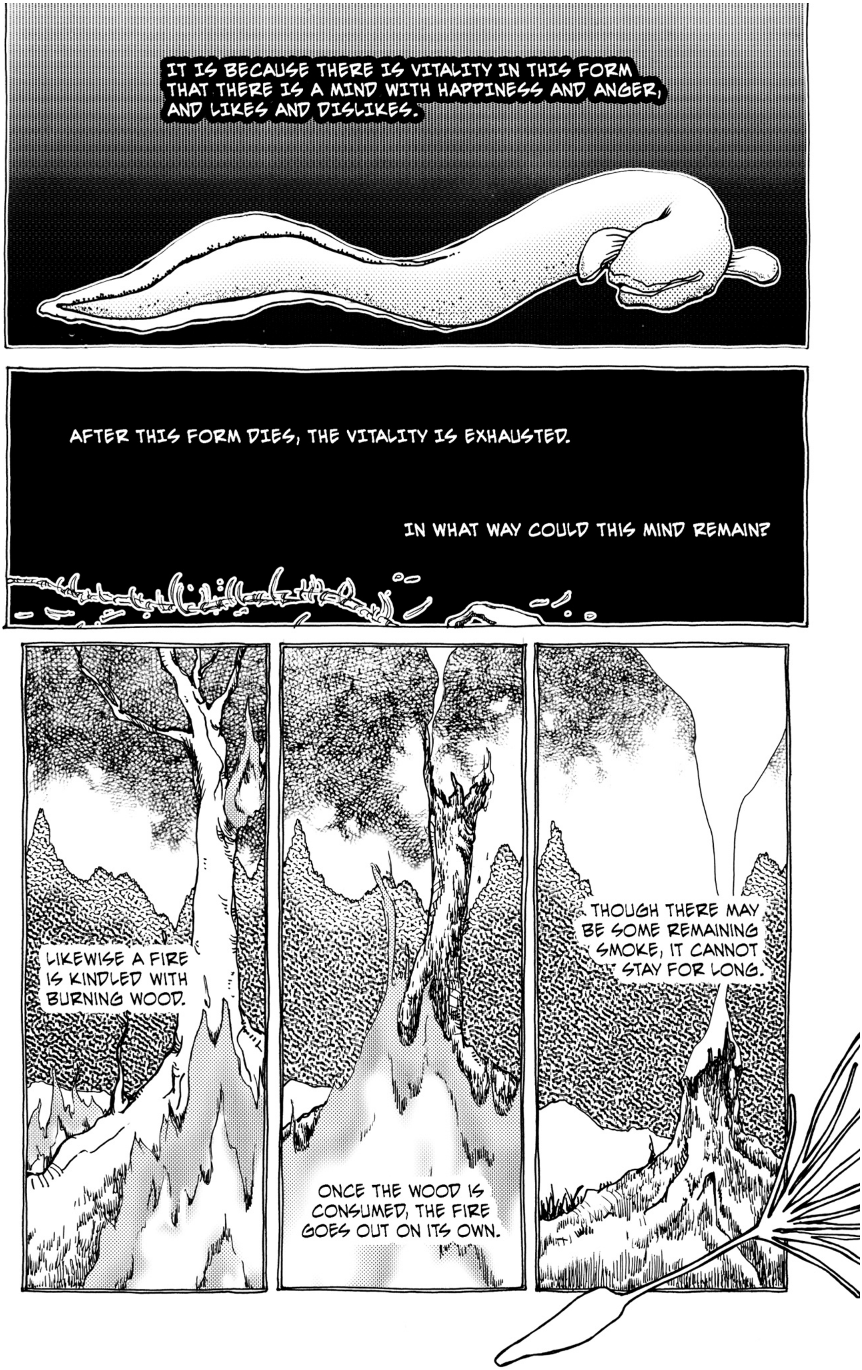

YOU'LL MAKE YOUR HOME IN THE WATER EVEN WHEN IT'S TERRIBLY COLD, BUT YOU WON'T BE COLD AT ALL; YOU'LL TUMBLE ALONG WITH THE TIDES, BUT WILL LIVE YOUR LIFE APPROPRIATELY.
IT IS THE CONSISTENCY OF PRINCIPLE THAT WHEN FORM CHANGES, THE MIND AND CH'I CHANGE WITH IT.
PRINCIPLE HAS NO FORM, BUT EXISTS WITHIN CH'I.

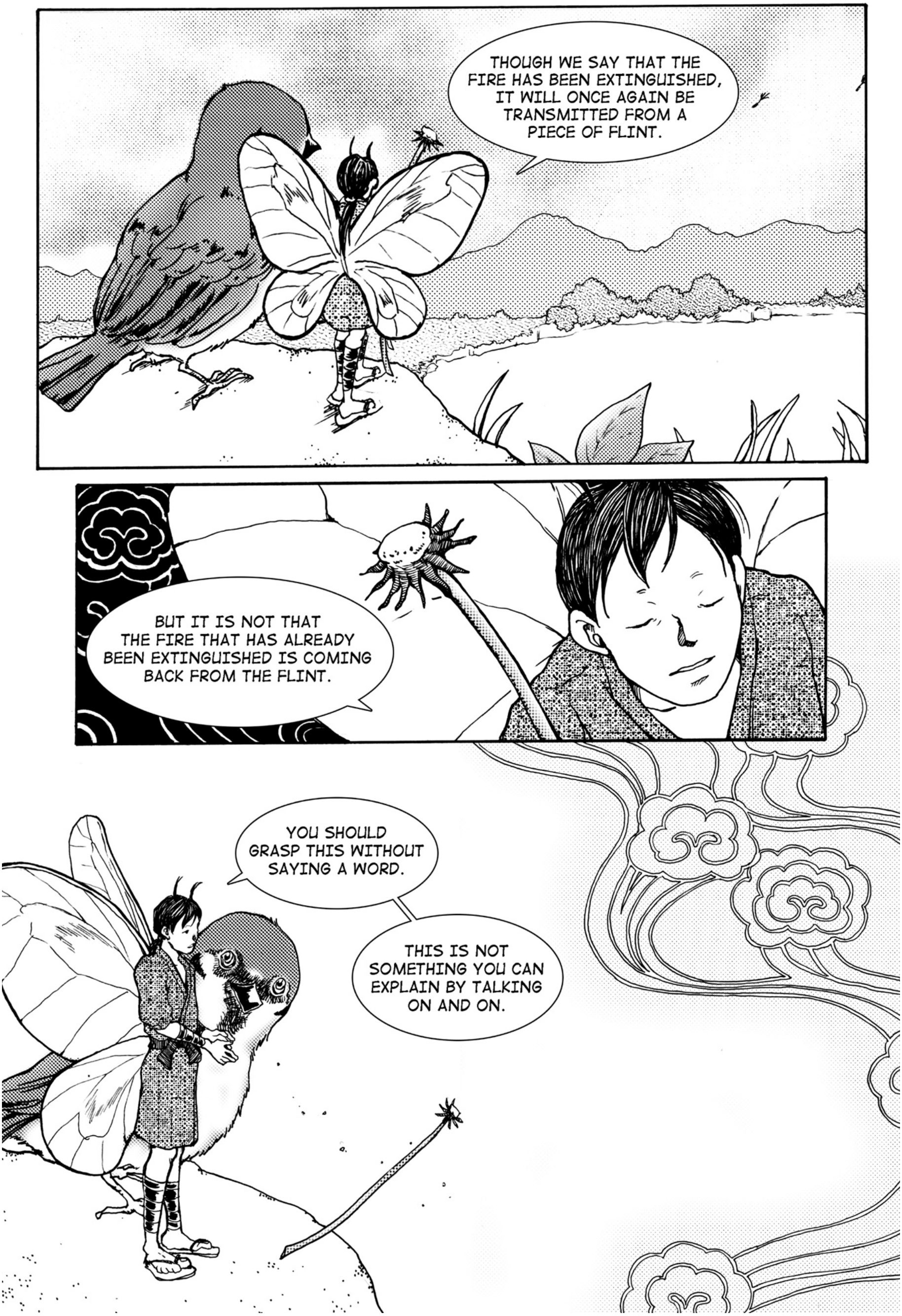

RIGHT NOW YOU HAVE THE FORM OF A SPARROW AND, HAVING A SPARROW'S CH'I, THE PRINCIPLE OF A SPARROW TAKES ON EXISTENCE.
LIKEWISE, WHEN YOU HAVE THE FORM AND CH'I OF A CLAM, THE PRINCIPLE OF A CLAM WILL TAKE ON EXISTENCE.
THE MIND OF THE FORM FOLLOWS THAT FORM. WHEN THE FORM IS EXTINGUISHED, THE MIND OF THAT FORM DISAPPEARS, TOO.

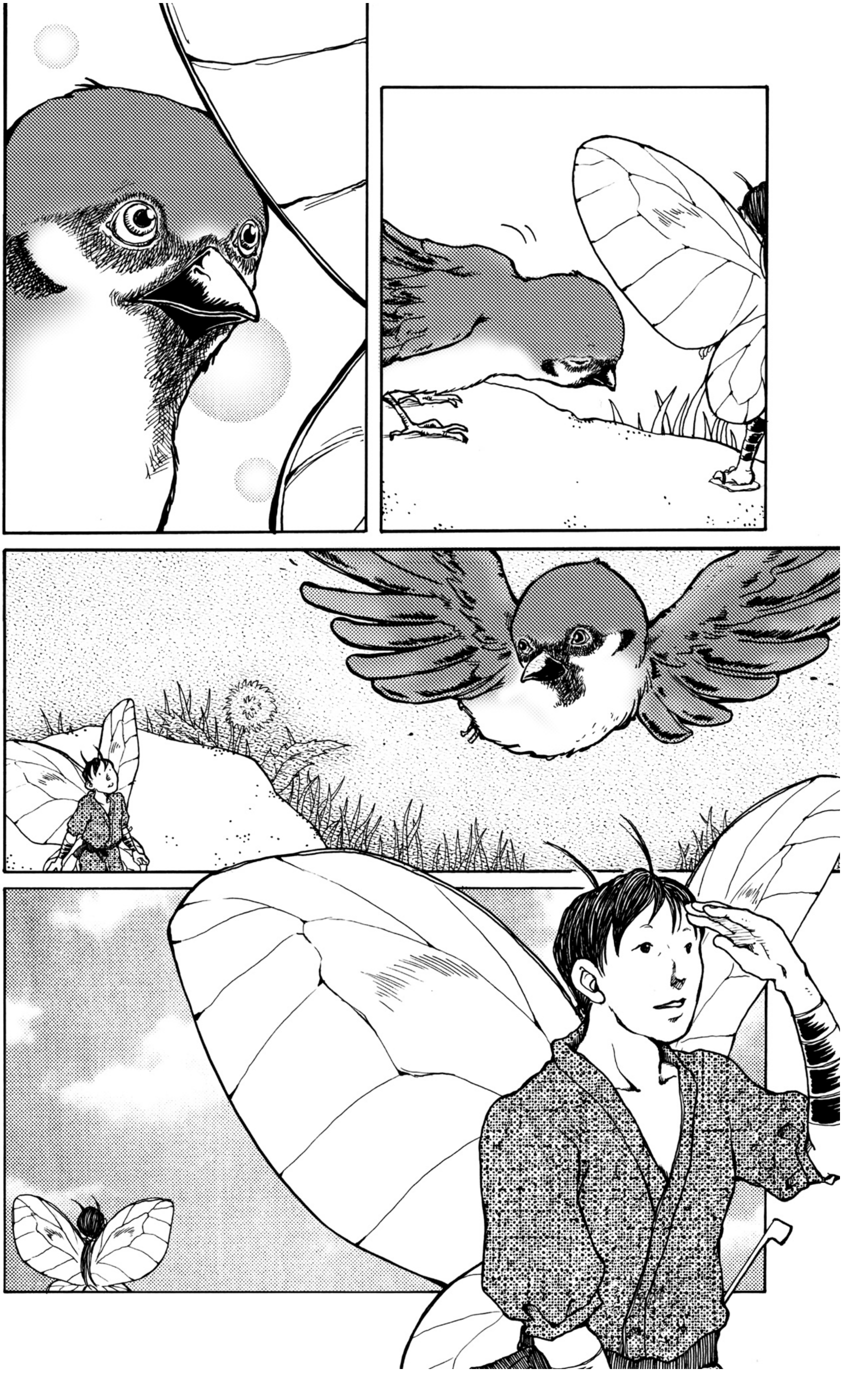

A LONG TIME AGO THERE WAS AN OLD MAN. WHEN HE WAS APPROACHING DEATH, A PRIEST FROM HIS FAMILY TEMPLE CAME BY AND SUGGESTED THAT HE CHANT THE NEMBUTSU.
THE TEN THOUSAND THINGS ARE BORN FROM EMPTINESS AND RETURN TO EMPTINESS. HOW CAN THERE BE A TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS?
WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN FACED WITH THE WORST? JUST TOSS PRINCIPLES ASIDE AND CHANT THE NEMBUTSU!
EVEN IF THERE WERE SUCH A THING AS REBIRTH, IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD.
HONORED PRIEST, DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME YOU WERE IN YOUR MOTHER'S WOMB? WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WERE BEING BORN? TELL ME!
IS THERE EVEN ONE PERSON WHO COULD REMEMBER THIS? DO YOU REMEMBER?
I DON'T REMEMBER EITHER, NOR IS THERE ANYONE WHO REMEMBERS ANYTHING CLOSE TO THE TIME THEY WERE BORN; MUCH LESS SHOULD THERE BE ANYONE WHO REMEMBERS A DISTANT FORMER BIRTH.

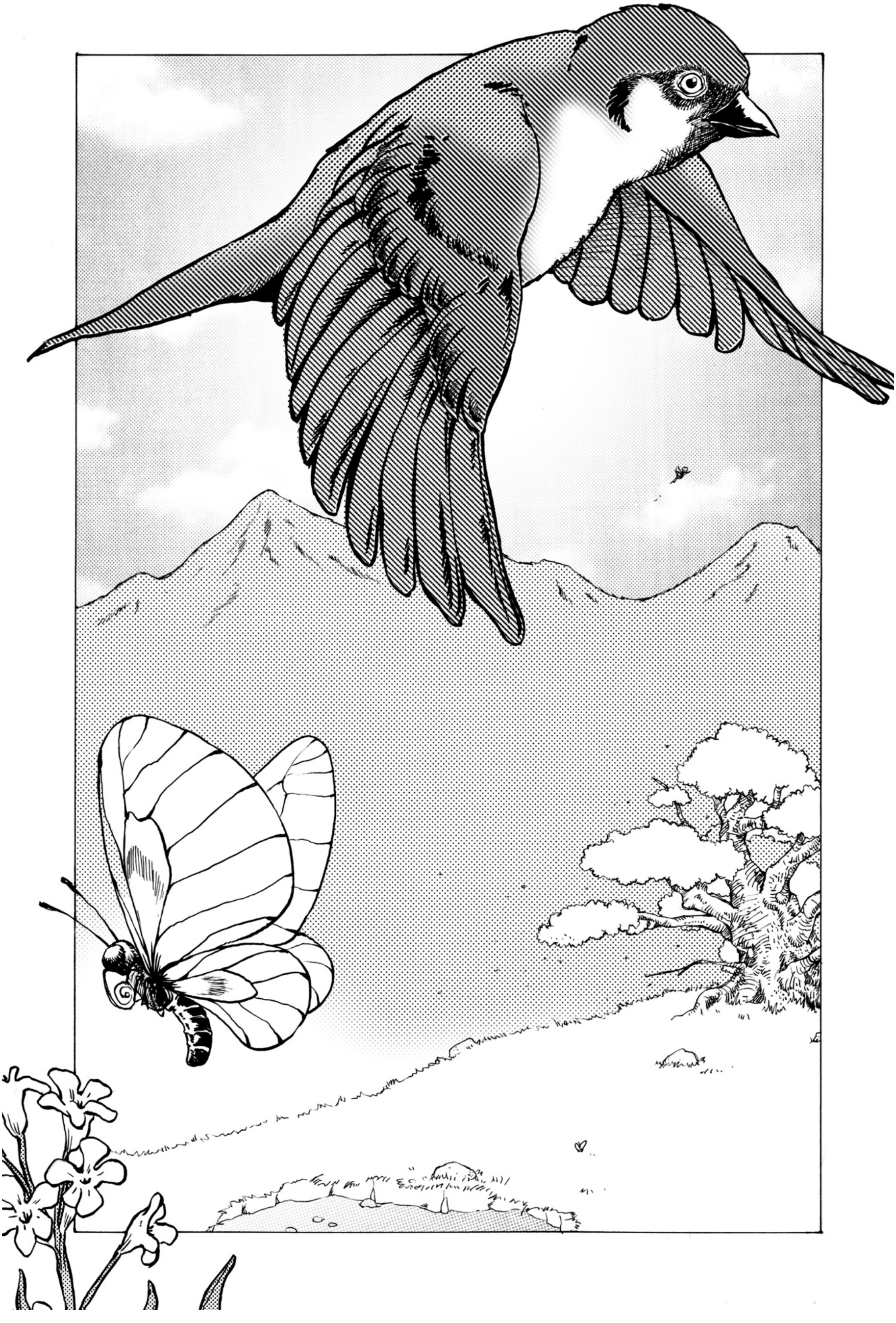

SO EVEN IF I AM REBORN INTO SOMETHING AFTER THIS, MY PRESENT MIND WILL BE COMPLETELY EXTINGUISHED.
EVEN IF I BECOME AN ANT OR A MOUSE, I'LL HAVE THE MIND OF WHATEVER I'M BORN AS AND SHOULD LIVE APPROPRIATELY. ONE LIFE IS LIKE A DREAM, AND THE NEXT WORLD WILL ALSO BE ONE LIFE.
THAT, TOO, WILL BE LIKE A DREAM, RIGHT?
IF THAT IS SO, IT IS FOOLISH TO TAKE GREAT PAINS AT THE VERY INTERVAL BETWEEN LIVES OVER SOMETHING YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW. YOU SHOULD DIE SIMPLY THINKING, "THIS IS IT."
THAT IS THE BEST THOUGHT YOU CAN HAVE AT THE MOMENT, AND IS IN FACT BECOMING A BUDDHA.
WITH THIS, THE PRIEST WITHDREW WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.


NOW MOUNTAIN POTATOES METAMORPHOSE AND BECOME EELS; ROTTEN GRASS METAMORPHOSES AND BECOMES FIREFLIES.
JUST AS AN EXPERIMENT, ASK AN EEL OR A FIREFLY IF THEY REMEMBER THE MIND OF A MOUNTAIN POTATO OR OF ROTTEN GRASS.
YIN AND YANG COME TOGETHER AND THERE IS FORM; REVOLVING WITHIN THAT FORM AND ITS CH'I, THERE ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF MOTION AND REST, AND SPEECH AND SILENCE.
WHEN THE VITALITY IS EXHAUSTED, IT DEPARTS FROM THE FORM, AND THIS IS CALLED DEATH.

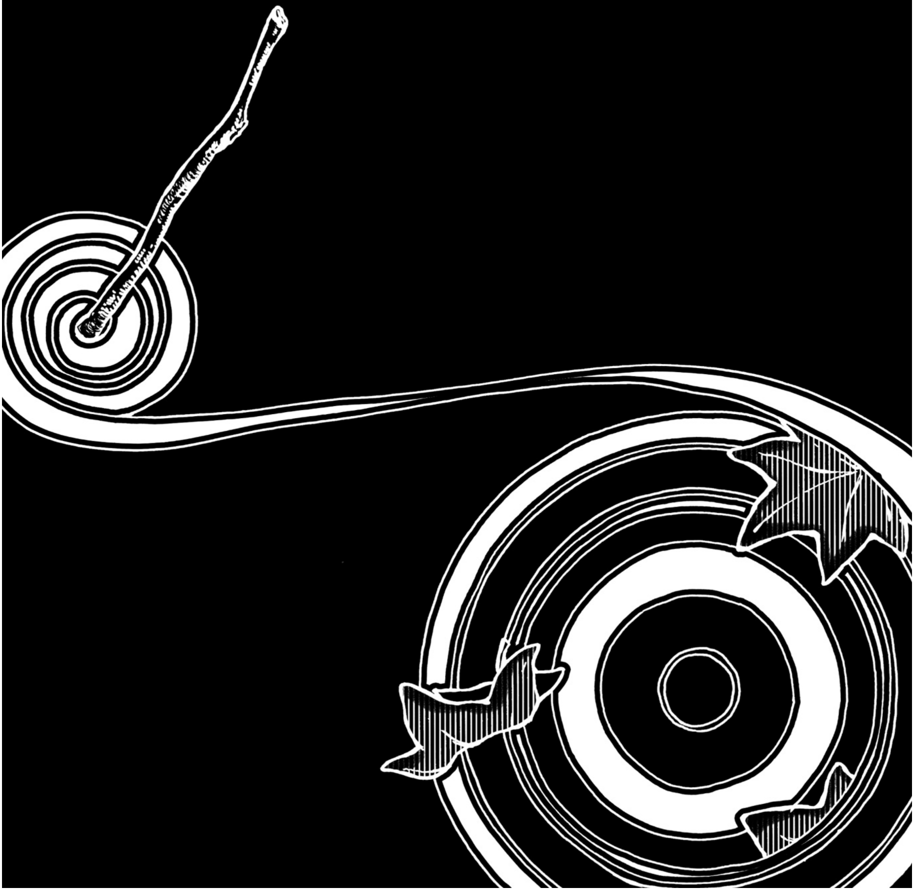

IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS VITALITY IN THIS FORM THAT THERE IS A MIND WITH HAPPINESS AND ANGER, AND LIKES AND DISLIKES.
AFTER THIS FORM DIES, THE VITALITY IS EXHAUSTED.
IN WHAT WAY COULD THIS MIND REMAIN?
LIKEWISE A FIRE IS KINDLED WITH BURNING WOOD.
ONCE THE WOOD IS CONSUMED, THE FIRE GOES OUT ON ITS OWN.
THOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME REMAINING SMOKE, IT CANNOT STAY FOR LONG.

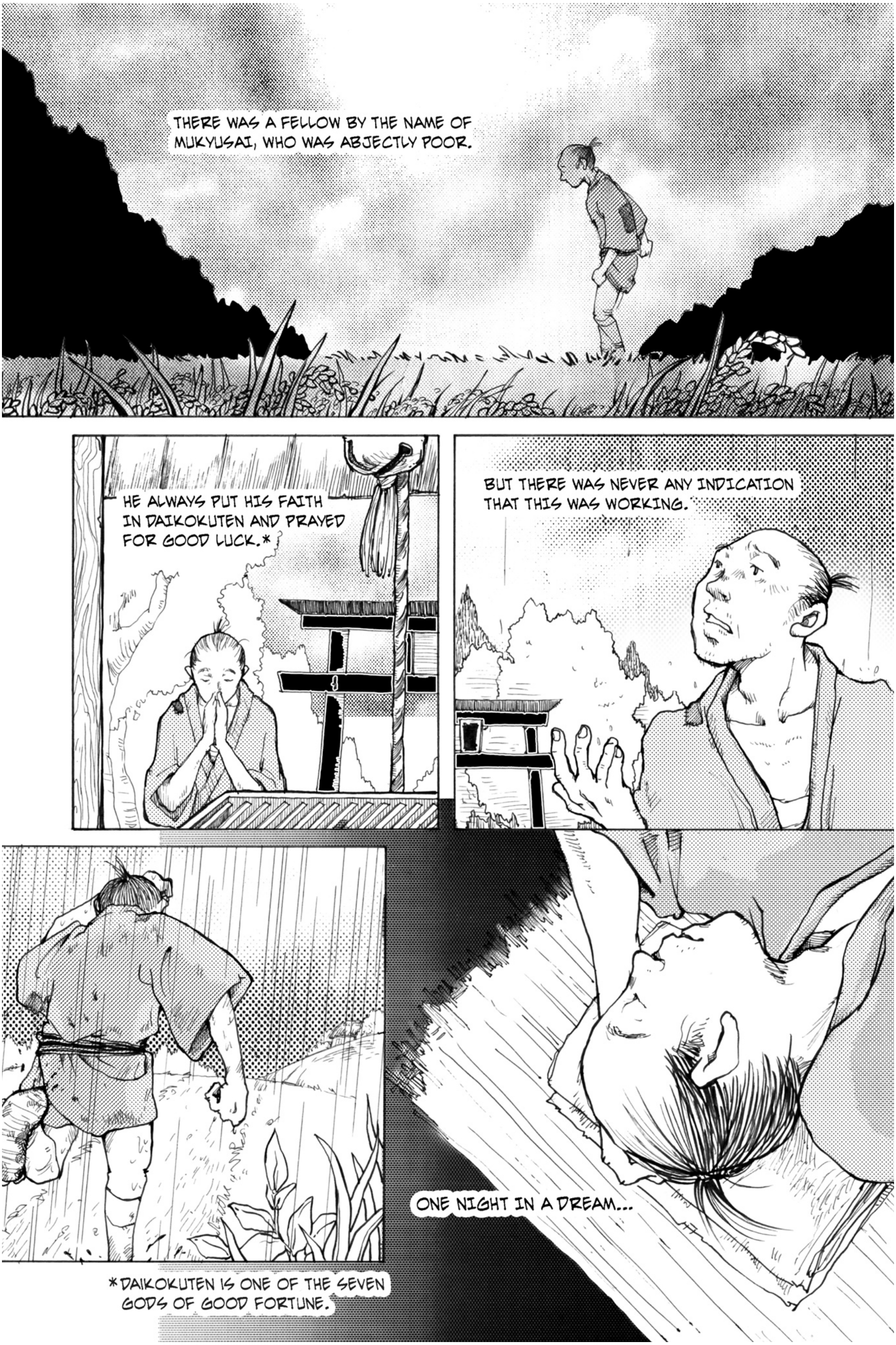

THOUGH WE SAY THAT THE FIRE HAS BEEN EXTINGUISHED, IT WILL ONCE AGAIN BE TRANSMITTED FROM A PIECE OF FLINT.
BUT IT IS NOT THAT THE FIRE THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN EXTINGUISHED IS COMING BACK FROM THE FLINT.
YOU SHOULD GRASP THIS WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.
THIS IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN EXPLAIN BY TALKING ON AND ON.



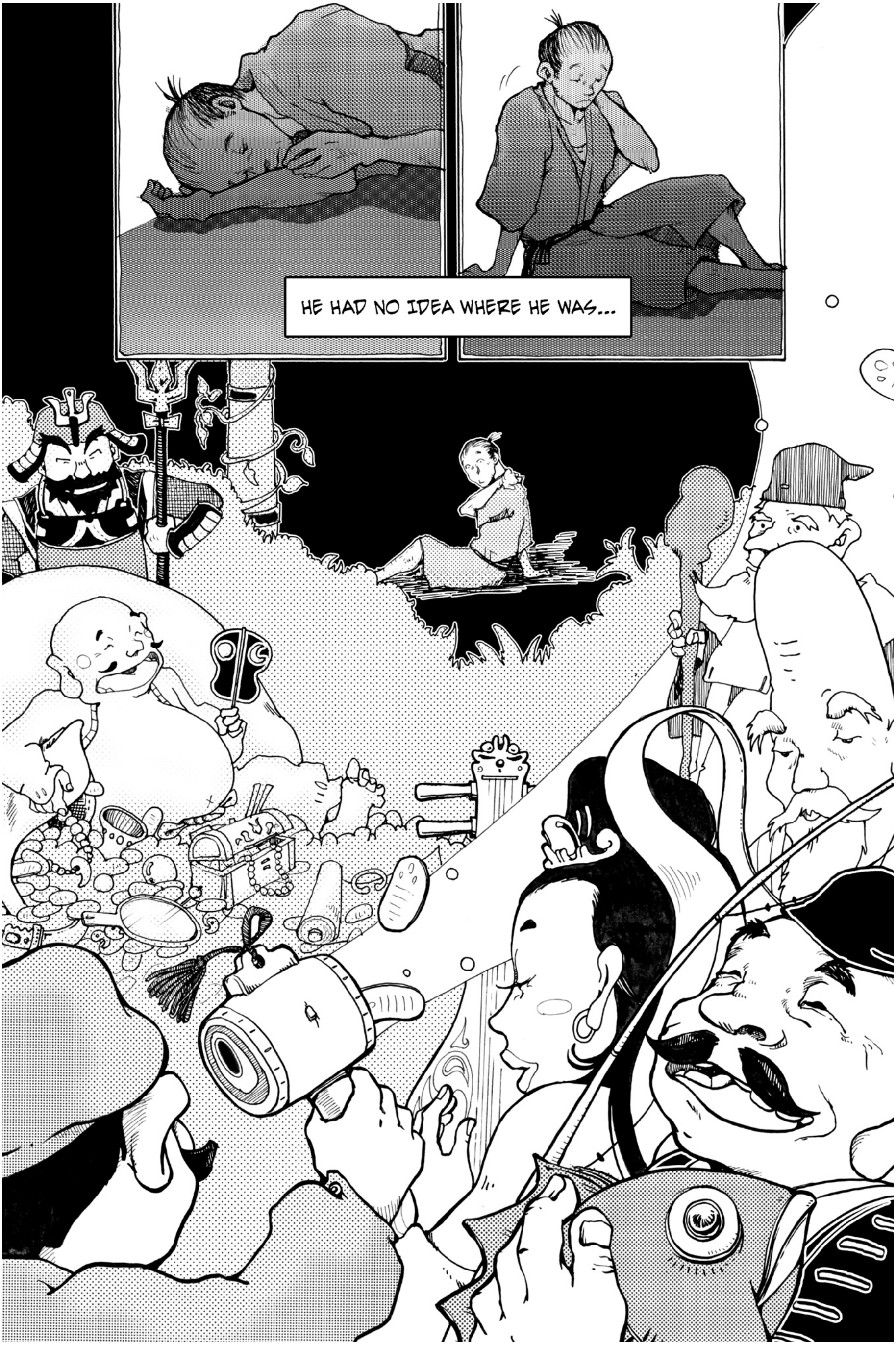


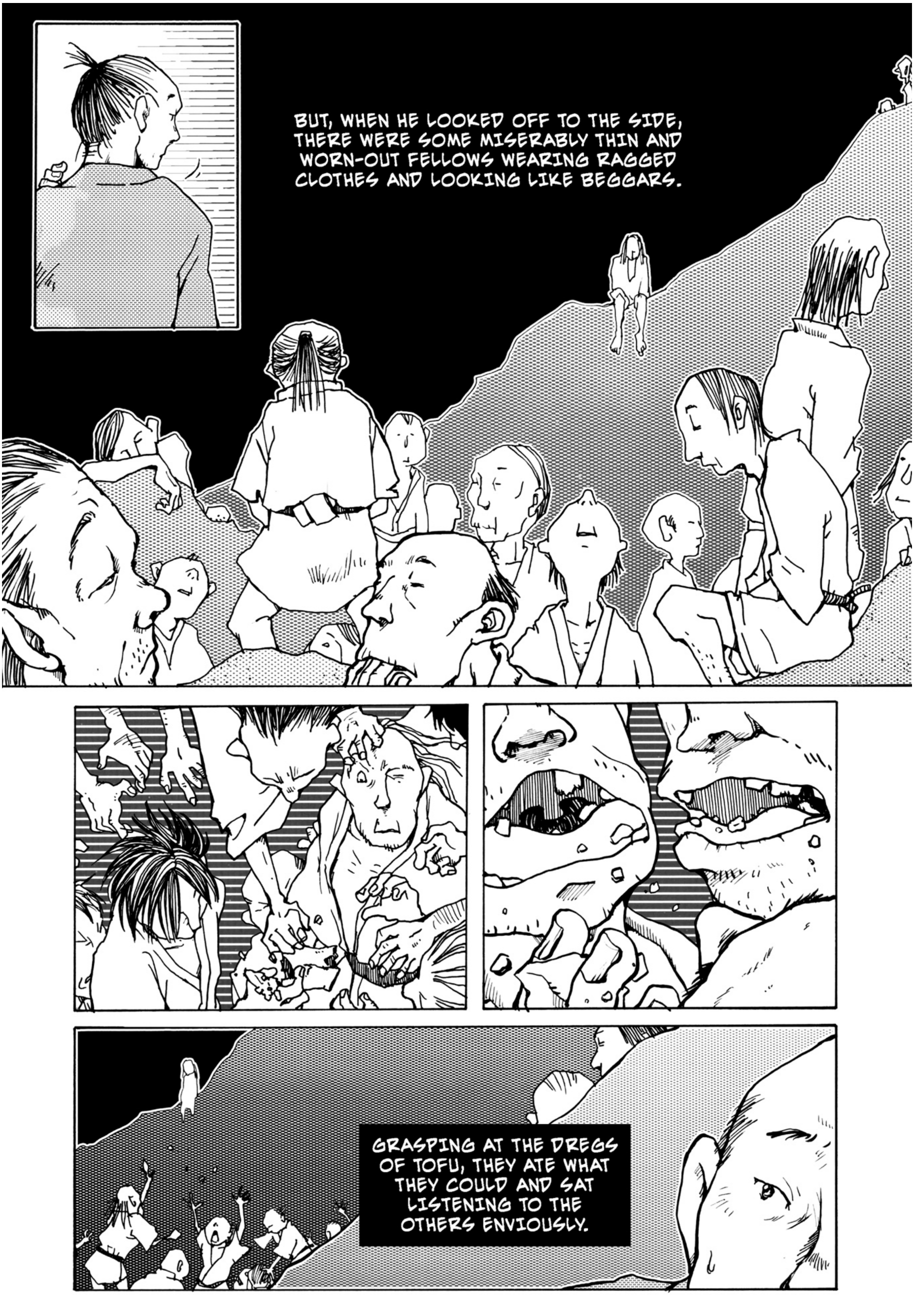
MEETING THE GODS OF POVERTY IN A DREAM

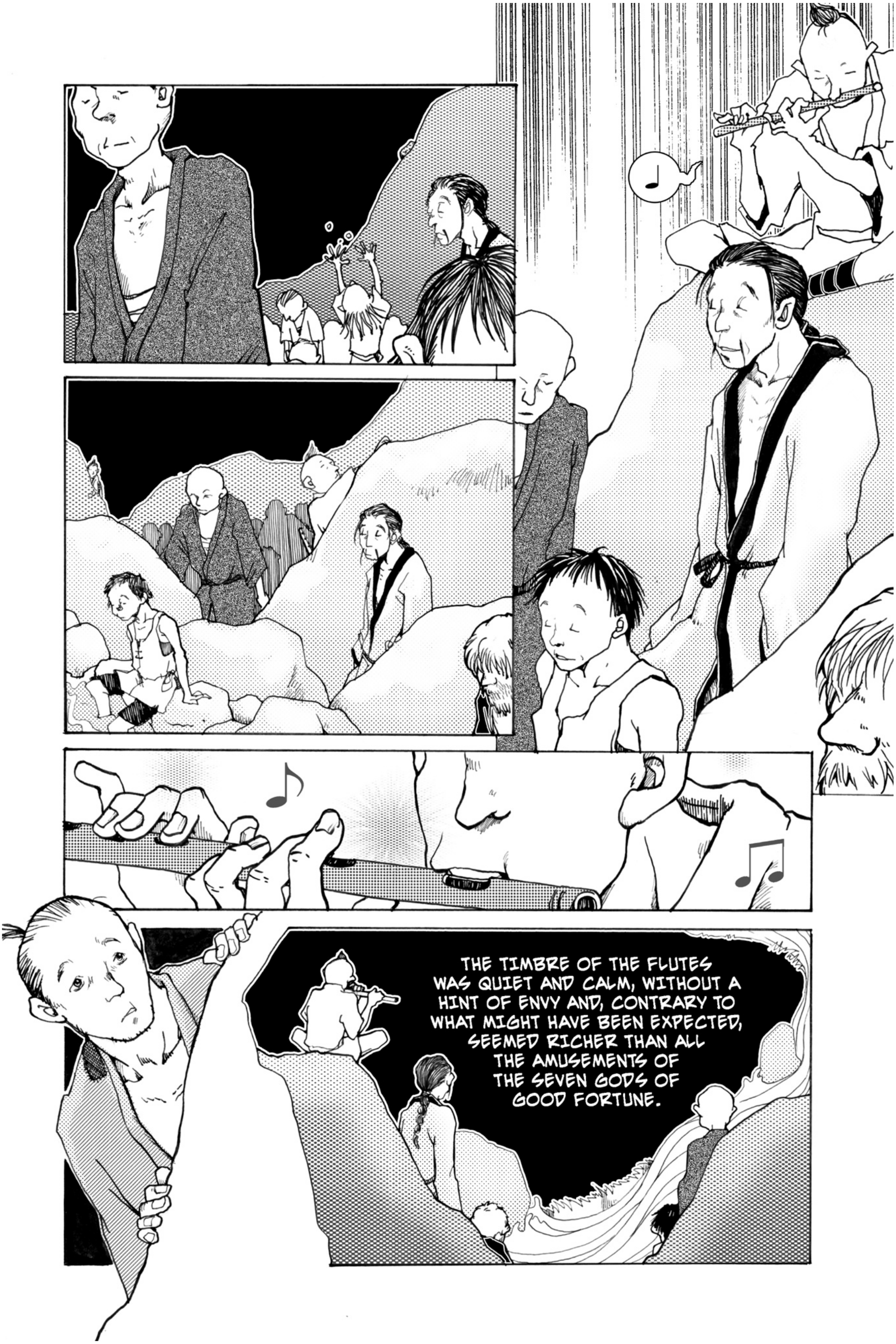


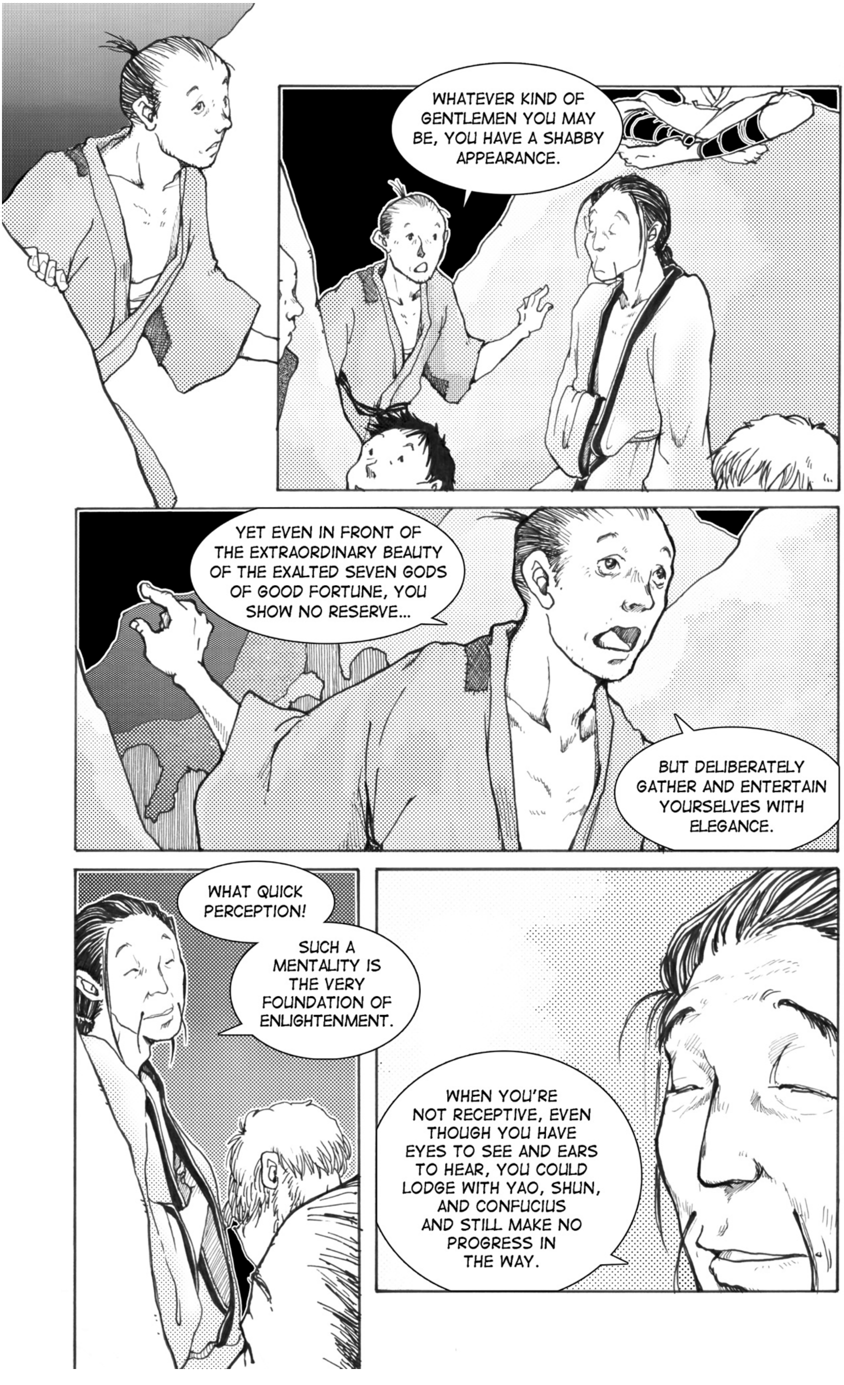

THERE WAS A FELLOW BY THE NAME OF MUKYUSAI, WHO WAS ABJECTLY POOR.
HE ALWAYS PUT HIS FAITH IN DAIKOKUTEN AND PRAYED FOR GOOD LUCK.*
BUT THERE WAS NEVER ANY INDICATION THAT THIS WAS WORKING.
ONE NIGHT IN A DREAM...

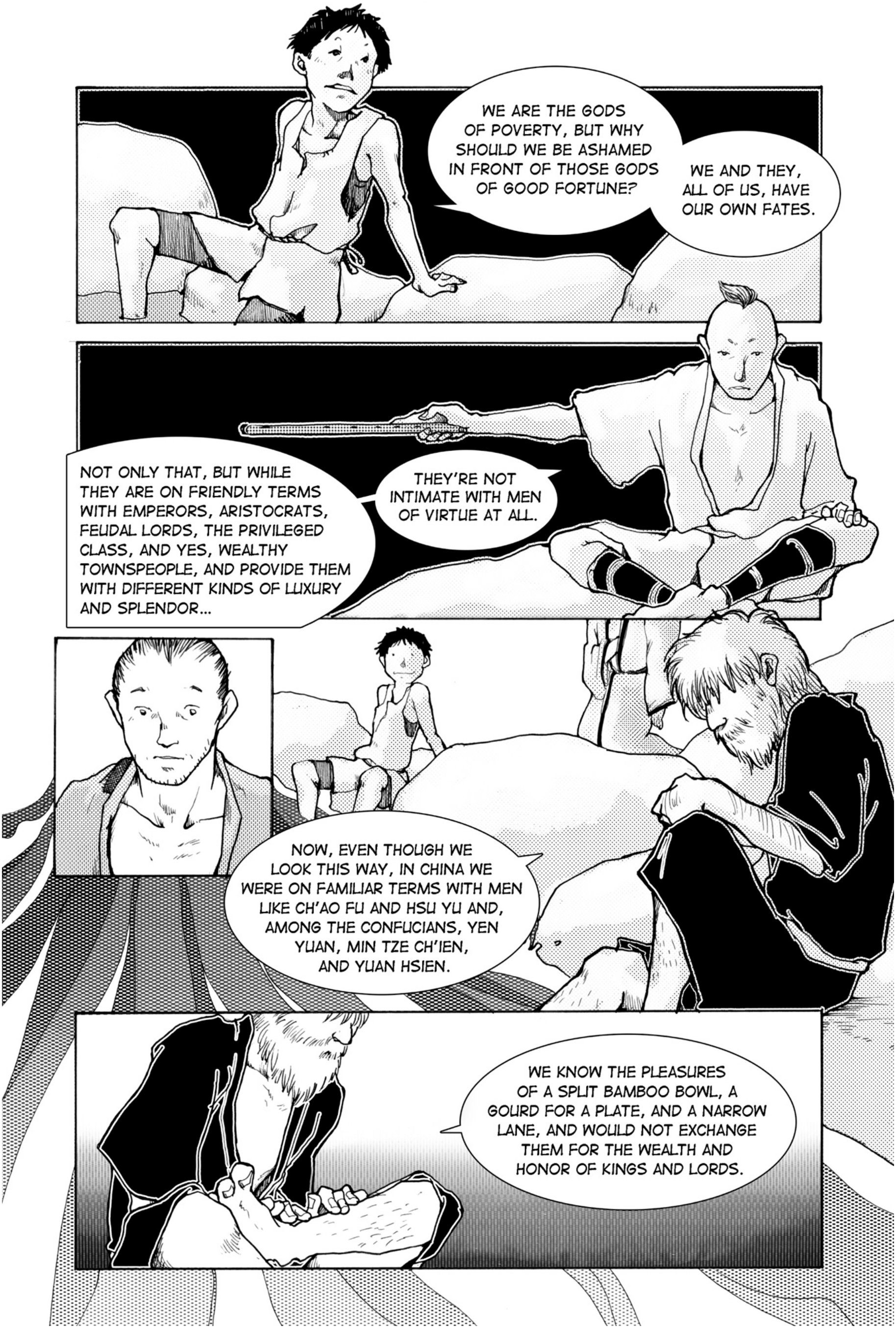
*DAIKOKUTEN IS ONE OF THE SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE.

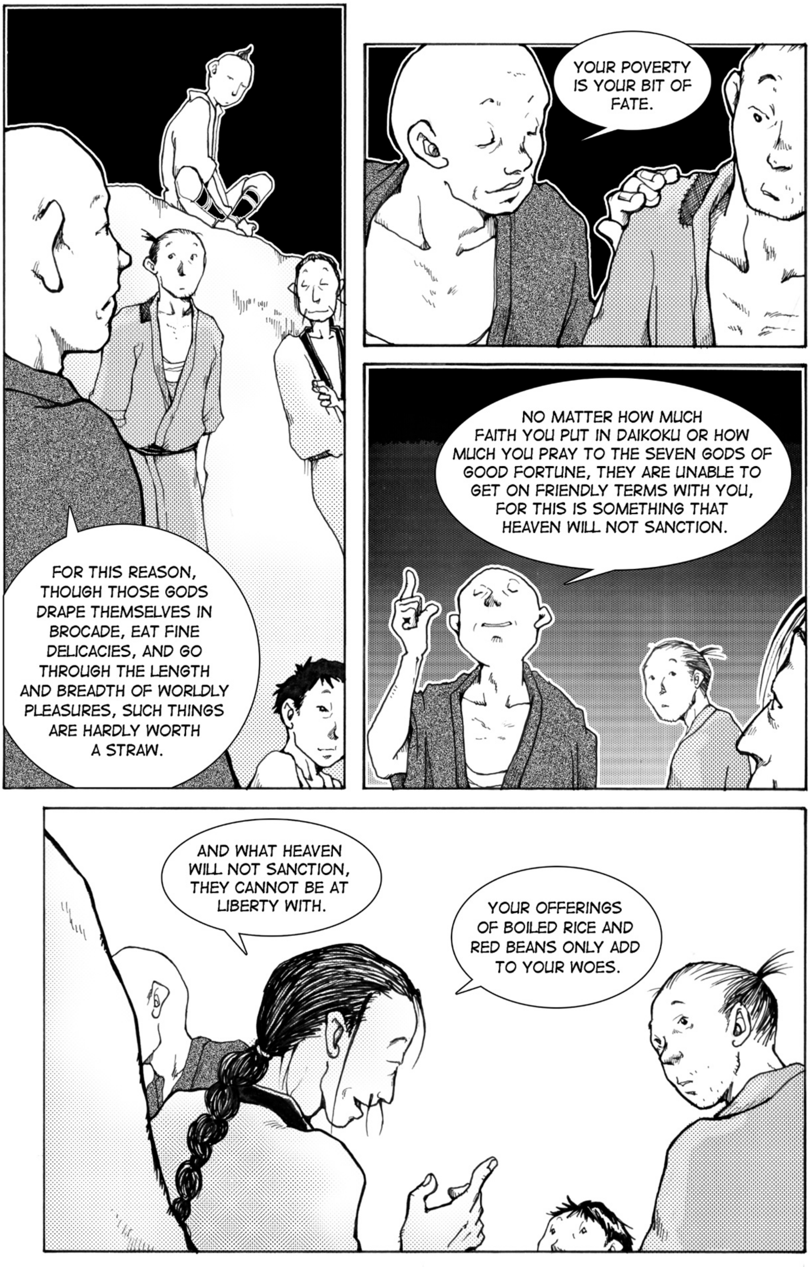

HE HAD NO IDEA WHERE HE WAS...

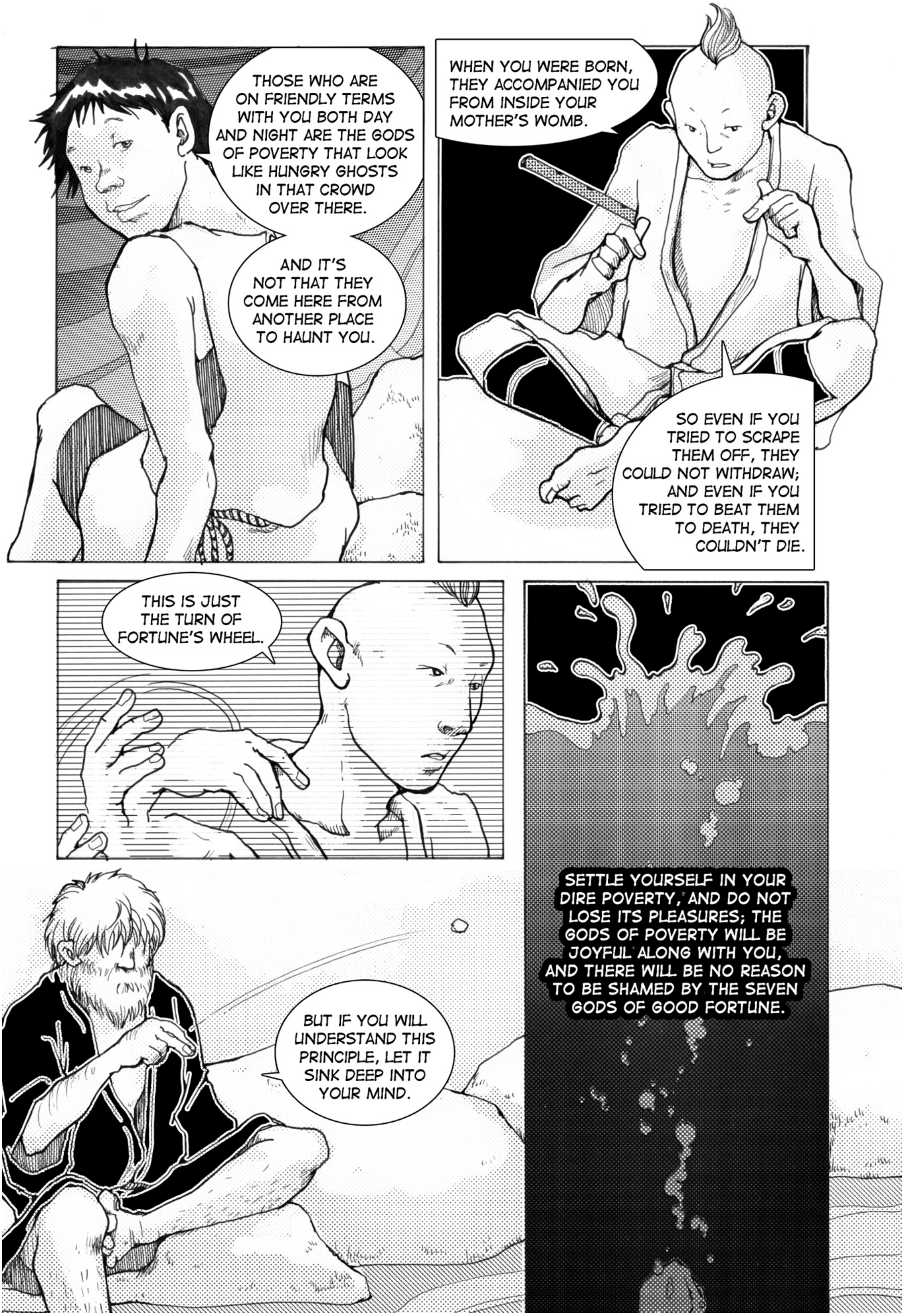

BUT, WHEN HE LOOKED OFF TO THE SIDE, THERE WERE SOME MISERABLY THIN AND WORN-OUT FELLOWS WEARING RAGGED CLOTHES AND LOOKING LIKE BEGGARS.
GRASPING AT THE DREGS OF TOFU, THEY ATE WHAT THEY COULD AND SAT LISTENING TO THE OTHERS ENVIOUSLY.

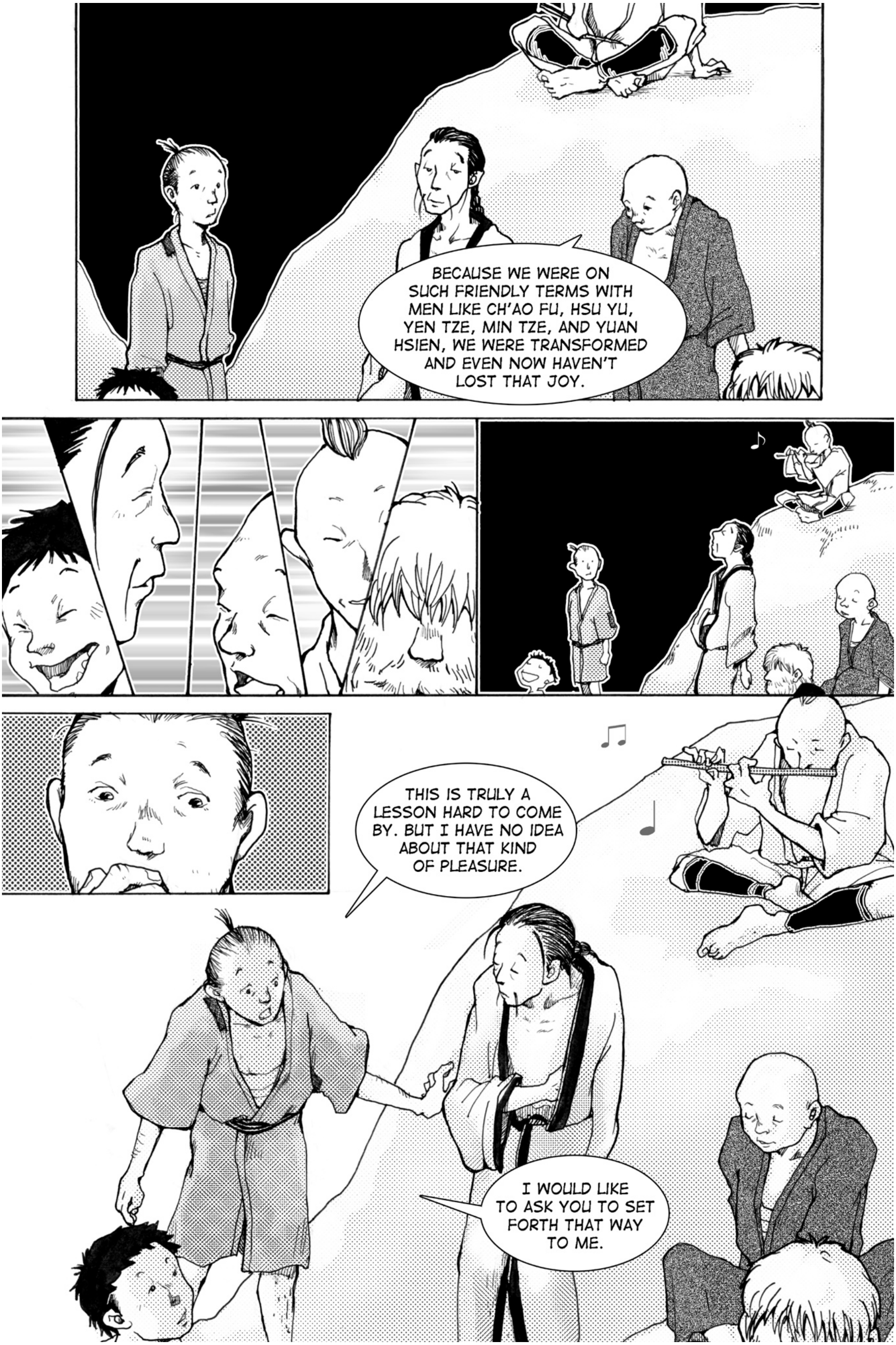

THE TIMBRE OF THE FLUTES WAS QUIET AND CALM, WITHOUT A HINT OF ENVY AND, CONTRARY TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, SEEMED RICHER THAN ALL THE AMUSEMENTS OF THE SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE.

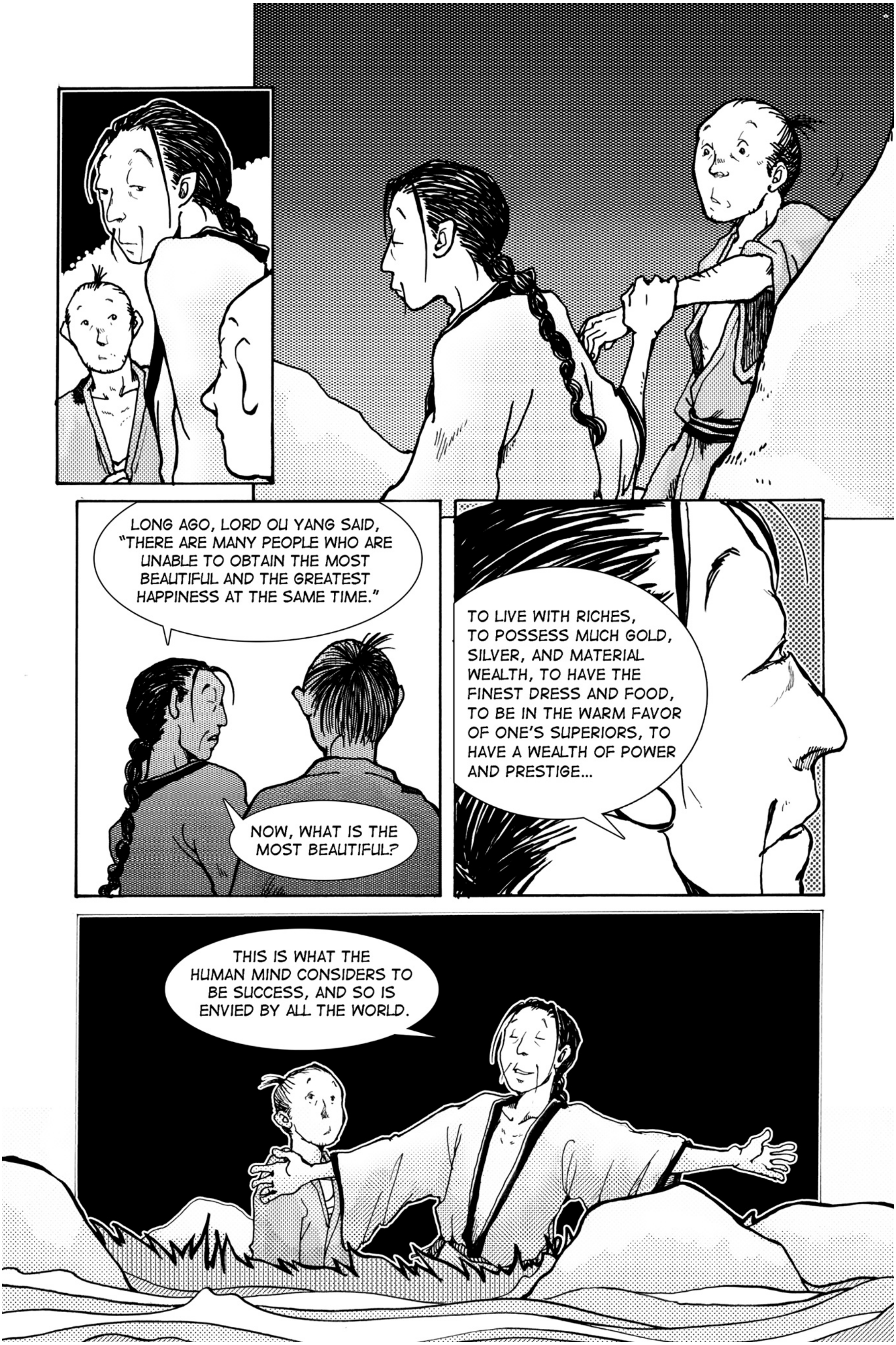

WHATEVER KIND OF GENTLEMEN YOU MAY BE, YOU HAVE A SHABBY APPEARANCE.
YET EVEN IN FRONT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY BEAUTY OF THE EXALTED SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE, YOU SHOW NO RESERVE...
BUT DELIBERATELY GATHER AND ENTERTAIN YOURSELVES WITH ELEGANCE.
WHAT QUICK PERCEPTION!
SUCH A MENTALITY IS THE VERY FOUNDATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT.
WHEN YOU'RE NOT RECEPTIVE, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE EYES TO SEE AND EARS TO HEAR, YOU COULD LODGE WITH YAO, SHUN, AND CONFUCIUS AND STILL MAKE NO PROGRESS IN THE WAY.

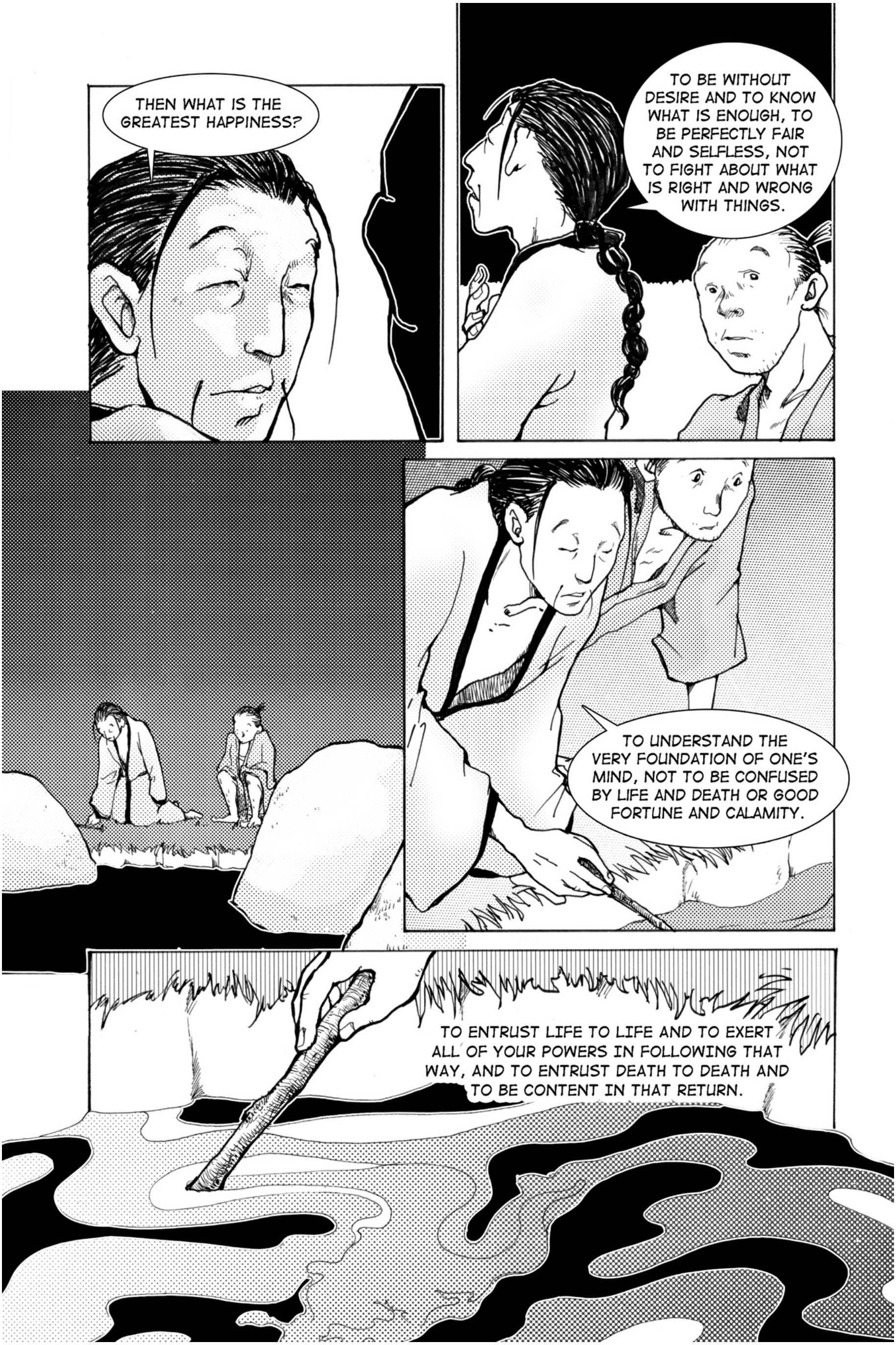

WE ARE THE GODS OF POVERTY, BUT WHY SHOULD WE BE ASHAMED IN FRONT OF THOSE GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE?
WE AND THEY, ALL OF US, HAVE OUR OWN FATES.
THEY'RE NOT INTIMATE WITH MEN OF VIRTUE AT ALL.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WHILE THEY ARE ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH EMPERORS, ARISTOCRATS, FEUDAL LORDS, THE PRIVILEGED CLASS, AND YES, WEALTHY TOWNSPEOPLE, AND PROVIDE THEM WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF LUXURY AND SPLENDOR...
NOW, EVEN THOUGH WE LOOK THIS WAY, IN CHINA WE WERE ON FAMILIAR TERMS WITH MEN LIKE CH'AO FU AND HSU YU AND, AMONG THE CONFUCIANS, YEN YUAN, MIN TZE CH'IEN, AND YUAN HSIEN.
WE KNOW THE PLEASURES OF A SPLIT BAMBOO BOWL, A GOURD FOR A PLATE, AND A NARROW LANE, AND WOULD NOT EXCHANGE THEM FOR THE WEALTH AND HONOR OF KINGS AND LORDS.

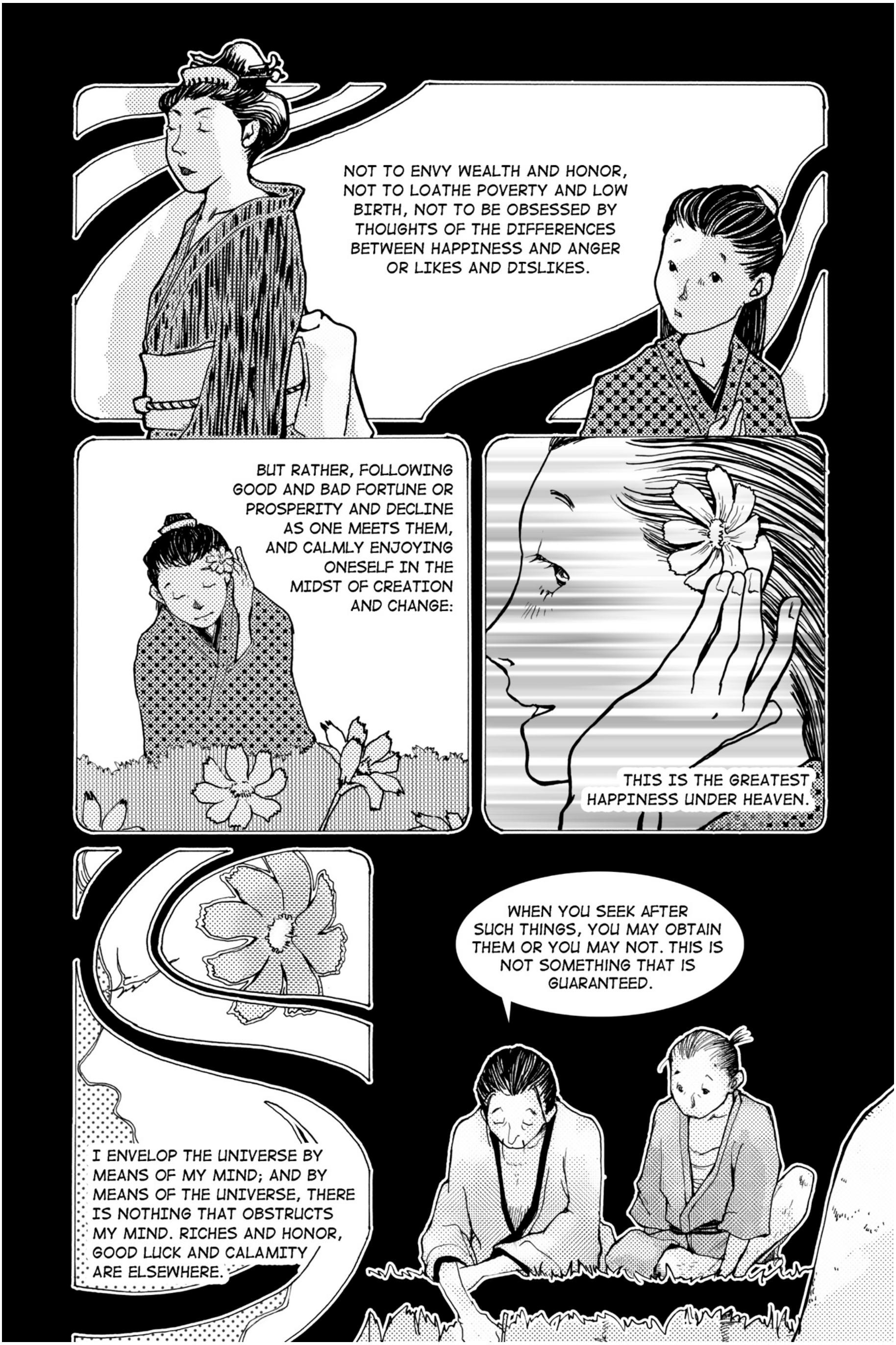

FOR THIS REASON, THOUGH THOSE GODS DRAPE THEMSELVES IN BROCADE, EAT FINE DELICACIES, AND GO THROUGH THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF WORLDLY PLEASURES, SUCH THINGS ARE HARDLY WORTH A STRAW.
YOUR POVERTY IS YOUR BIT OF FATE.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH FAITH YOU PUT IN DAIKOKU OR HOW MUCH YOU PRAY TO THE SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE, THEY ARE UNABLE TO GET ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH YOU, FOR THIS IS SOMETHING THAT HEAVEN WILL NOT SANCTION.
AND WHAT HEAVEN WILL NOT SANCTION, THEY CANNOT BE AT LIBERTY WITH.
YOUR OFFERINGS OF BOILED RICE AND RED BEANS ONLY ADD TO YOUR WOES.

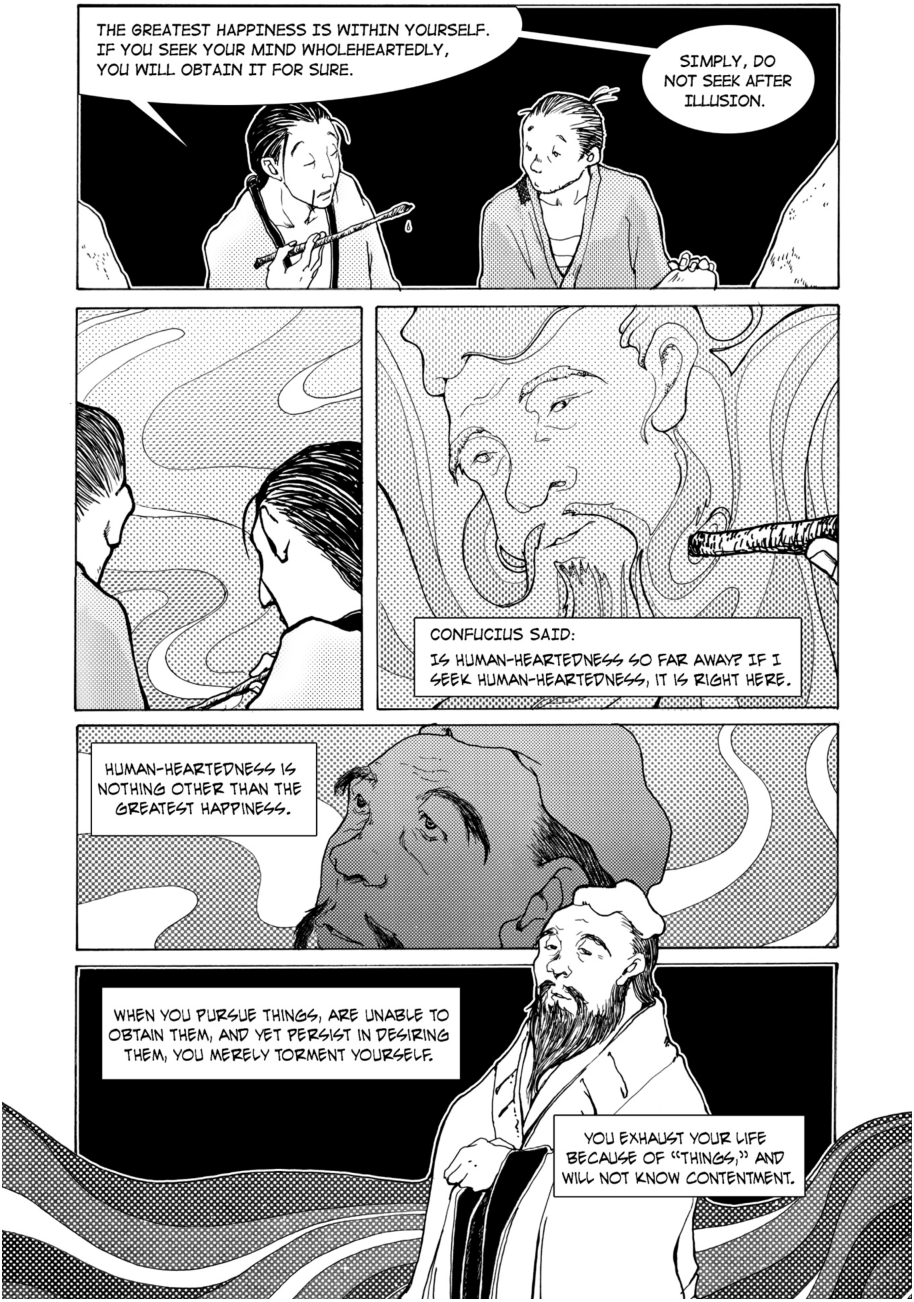

THOSE WHO ARE ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH YOU BOTH DAY AND NIGHT ARE THE GODS OF POVERTY THAT LOOK LIKE HUNGRY GHOSTS IN THAT CROWD OVER THERE.
AND IT'S NOT THAT THEY COME HERE FROM ANOTHER PLACE TO HAUNT YOU.
WHEN YOU WERE BORN, THEY ACCOMPANIED YOU FROM INSIDE YOUR MOTHER'S WOMB.
SO EVEN IF YOU TRIED TO SCRAPE THEM OFF, THEY COULD NOT WITHDRAW; AND EVEN IF YOU TRIED TO BEAT THEM TO DEATH, THEY COULDN'T DIE.
THIS IS JUST THE TURN OF FORTUNE'S WHEEL.
BUT IF YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THIS PRINCIPLE, LET IT SINK DEEP INTO YOUR MIND.
SETTLE YOURSELF IN YOUR DIRE POVERTY, AND DO NOT LOSE ITS PLEASURES; THE GODS OF POVERTY WILL BE JOYFUL ALONG WITH YOU, AND THERE WILL BE NO REASON TO BE SHAMED BY THE SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE.

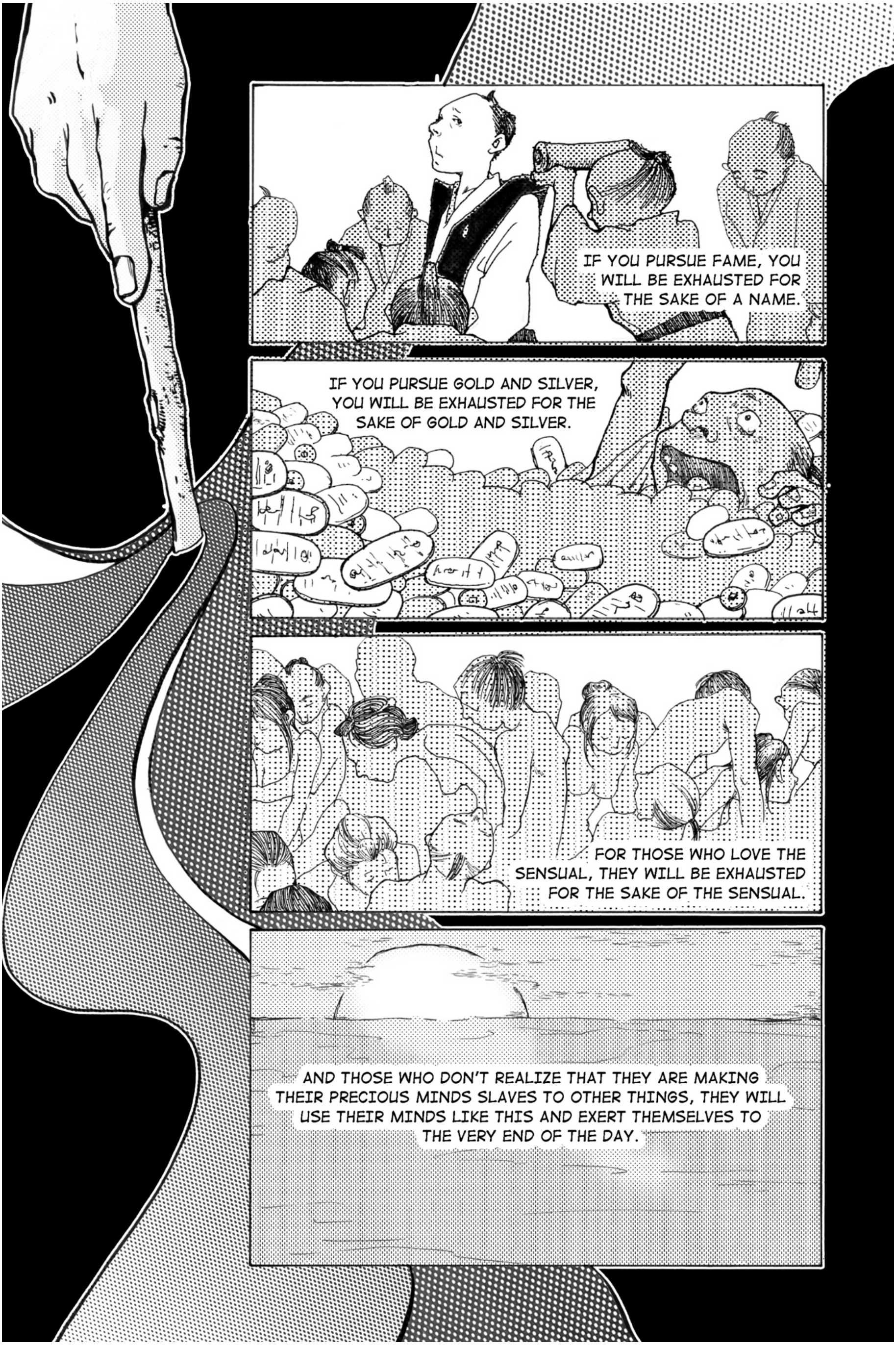

BECAUSE WE WERE ON SUCH FRIENDLY TERMS WITH MEN LIKE CH'AO FU, HSU YU, YEN TZE, MIN TZE, AND YUAN HSIEN, WE WERE TRANSFORMED AND EVEN NOW HAVEN'T LOST THAT JOY.
♪
♫
♩
THIS IS TRULY A LESSON HARD TO COME BY. BUT I HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT THAT KIND OF PLEASURE.
I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU TO SET FORTH THAT WAY TO ME.

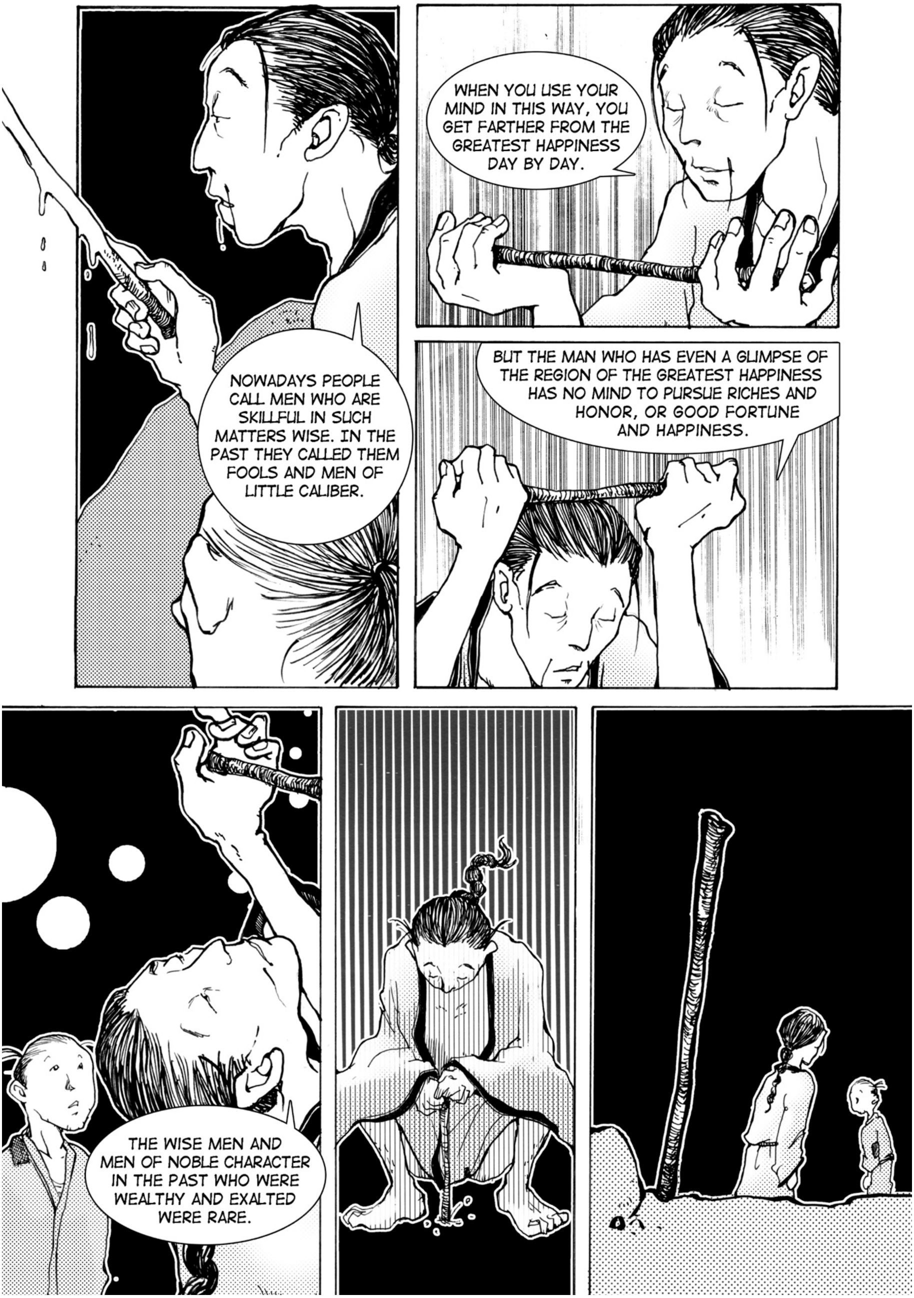

LONG AGO, LORD OU YANG SAID, "THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND THE GREATEST HAPPINESS AT THE SAME TIME."
NOW, WHAT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL?
TO LIVE WITH RICHES, TO POSSESS MUCH GOLD, SILVER, AND MATERIAL WEALTH, TO HAVE THE FINEST DRESS AND FOOD, TO BE IN THE WARM FAVOR OF ONE'S SUPERIORS, TO HAVE A WEALTH OF POWER AND PRESTIGE...
THIS IS WHAT THE HUMAN MIND CONSIDERS TO BE SUCCESS, AND SO IS ENVIED BY ALL THE WORLD.

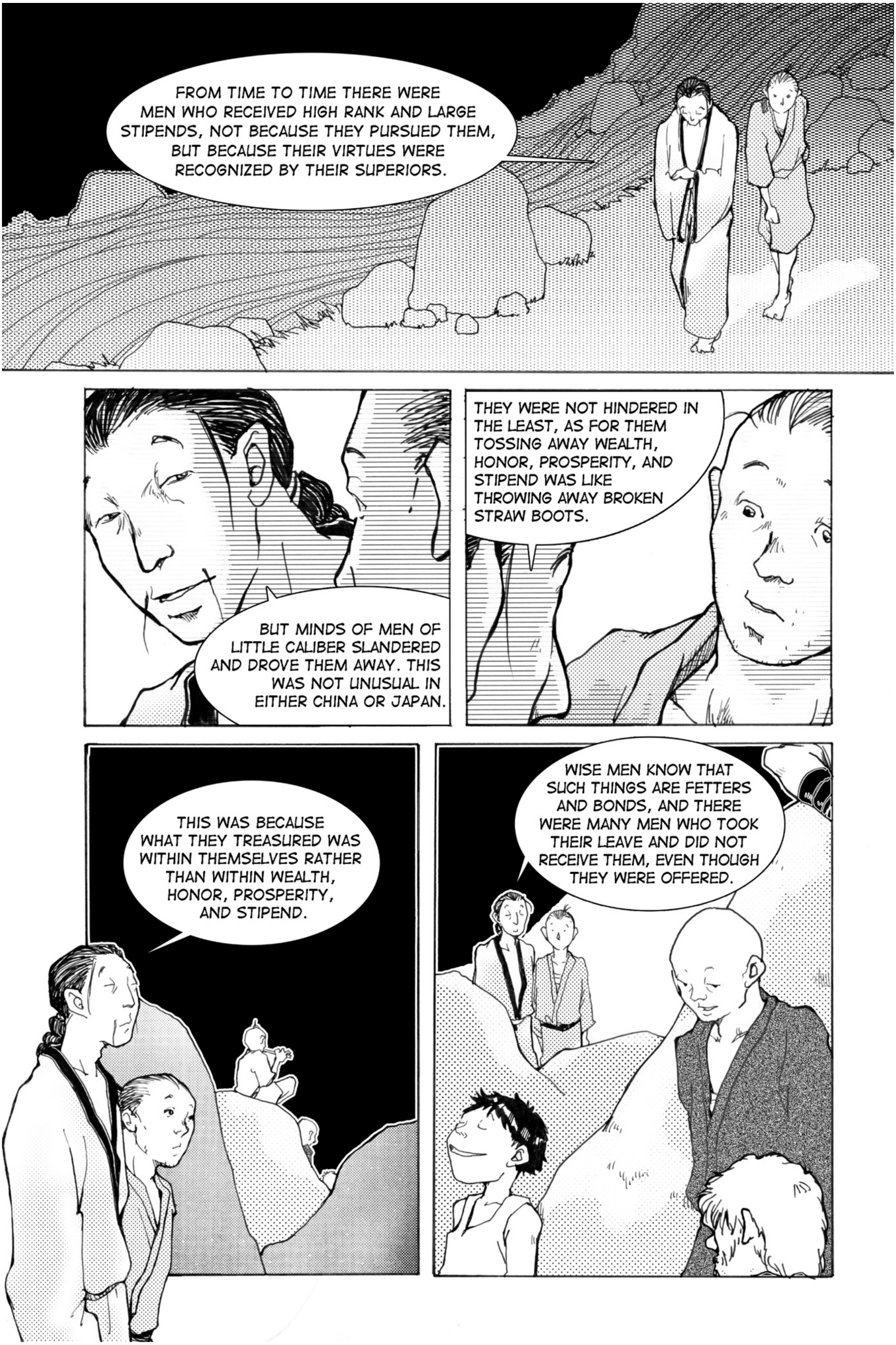

THEN WHAT IS THE GREATEST HAPPINESS?
TO BE WITHOUT DESIRE AND TO KNOW WHAT IS ENOUGH, TO BE PERFECTLY FAIR AND SELFLESS, NOT TO FIGHT ABOUT WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG WITH THINGS.
TO UNDERSTAND THE VERY FOUNDATION OF ONE'S MIND, NOT TO BE CONFUSED BY LIFE AND DEATH OR GOOD FORTUNE AND CALAMITY.
TO ENTRUST LIFE TO LIFE AND TO EXERT ALL OF YOUR POWERS IN FOLLOWING THAT WAY, AND TO ENTRUST DEATH TO DEATH AND TO BE CONTENT IN THAT RETURN.

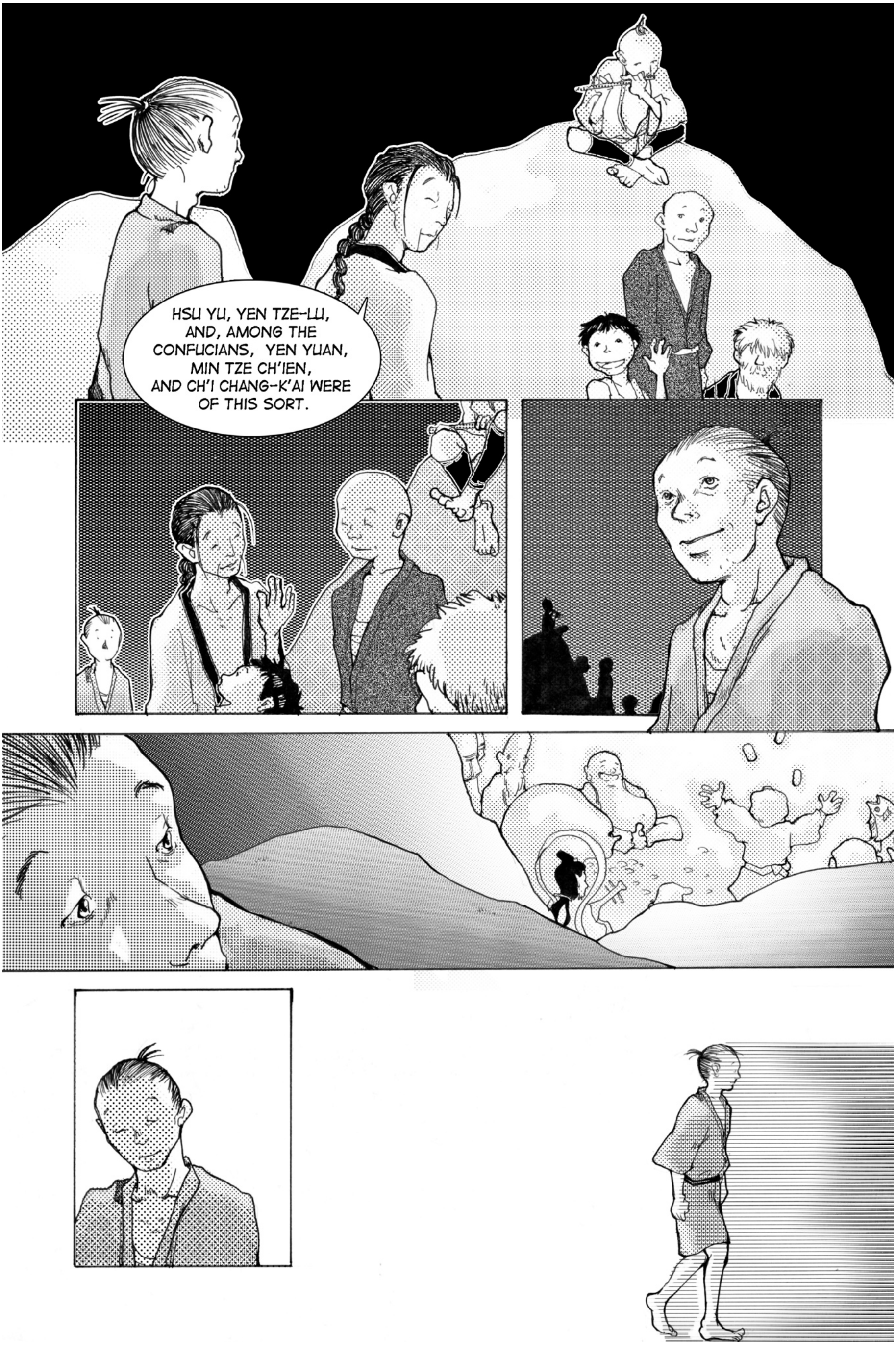

NOT TO ENVY WEALTH AND HONOR, NOT TO LOATHE POVERTY AND LOW BIRTH, NOT TO BE OBSESSED BY THOUGHTS OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND ANGER OR LIKES AND DISLIKES.
BUT RATHER, FOLLOWING GOOD AND BAD FORTUNE OR PROSPERITY AND DECLINE AS ONE MEETS THEM, AND CALMLY ENJOYING ONESELF IN THE MIDST OF CREATION AND CHANGE:
THIS IS THE GREATEST HAPPINESS UNDER HEAVEN.
WHEN YOU SEEK AFTER SUCH THINGS, YOU MAY OBTAIN THEM OR YOU MAY NOT. THIS IS NOT SOMETHING THAT IS GUARANTEED.
I ENVELOP THE UNIVERSE BY MEANS OF MY MIND; AND BY MEANS OF THE UNIVERSE, THERE IS NOTHING THAT OBSTRUCTS MY MIND. RICHES AND HONOR, GOOD LUCK AND CALAMITY ARE ELSEWHERE.


THE GREATEST HAPPINESS IS WITHIN YOURSELF. IF YOU SEEK YOUR MIND WHOLEHEARTEDLY, YOU WILL OBTAIN IT FOR SURE.
SIMPLY, DO NOT SEEK AFTER ILLUSION.
CONFUCIUS SAID: IS HUMAN-HEARTEDNESS SO FAR AWAY? IF I SEEK HUMAN-HEARTEDNESS, IT IS RIGHT HERE.
HUMAN-HEARTEDNESS IS NOTHING OTHER THAN THE GREATEST HAPPINESS.
WHEN YOU PURSUE THINGS, ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN THEM, AND YET PERSIST IN DESIRING THEM, YOU MERELY TORMENT YOURSELF.
YOU EXHAUST YOUR LIFE BECAUSE OF "THINGS," AND WILL NOT KNOW CONTENTMENT.


IF YOU PURSUE FAME, YOU WILL BE EXHAUSTED FOR THE SAKE OF A NAME.
IF YOU PURSUE GOLD AND SILVER, YOU WILL BE EXHAUSTED FOR THE SAKE OF GOLD AND SILVER.
FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE SENSUAL, THEY WILL BE EXHAUSTED FOR THE SAKE OF THE SENSUAL.
AND THOSE WHO DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY ARE MAKING THEIR PRECIOUS MINDS SLAVES TO OTHER THINGS, THEY WILL USE THEIR MINDS LIKE THIS AND EXERT THEMSELVES TO THE VERY END OF THE DAY.

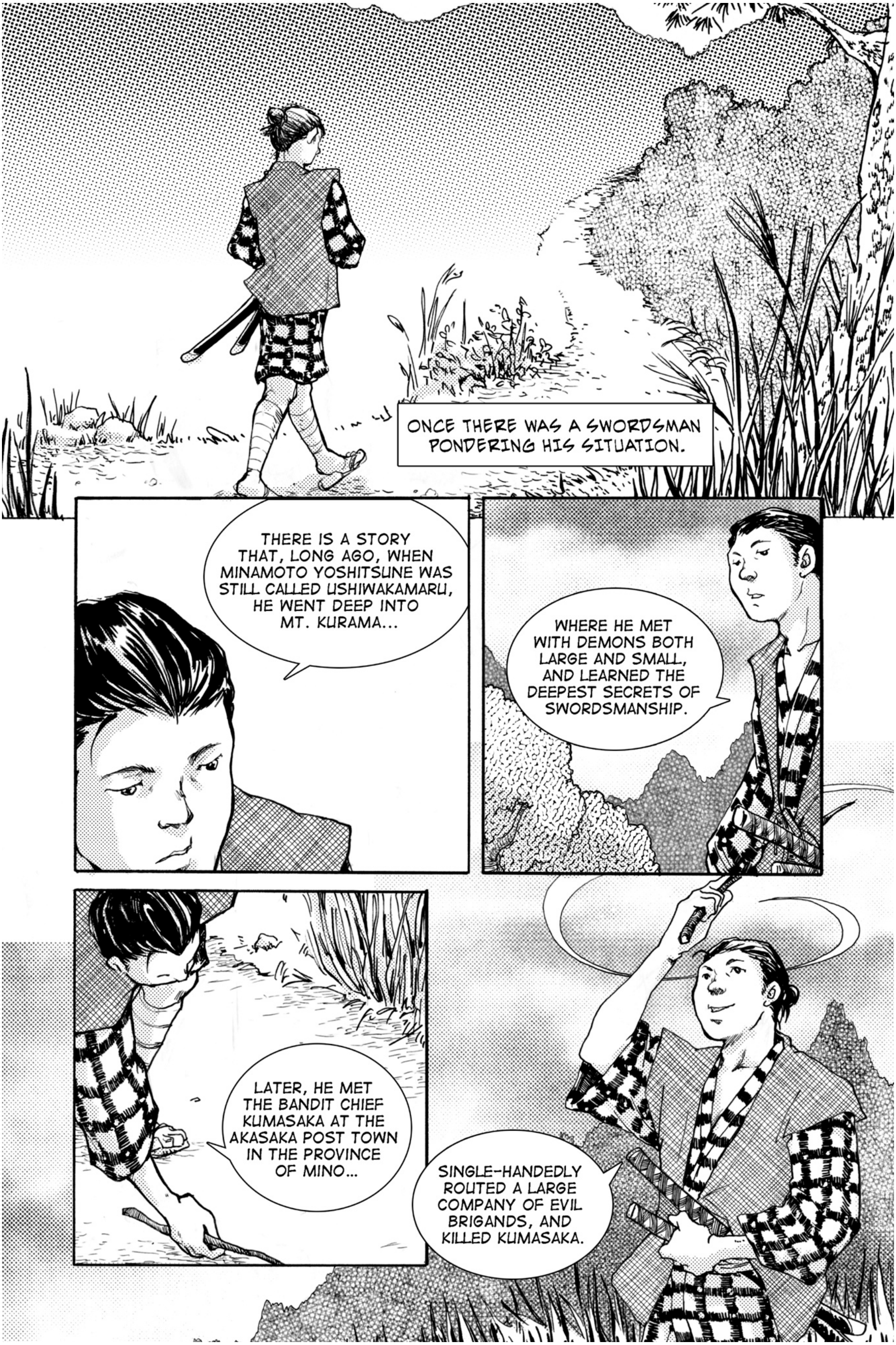

NOWADAYS PEOPLE CALL MEN WHO ARE SKILLFUL IN SUCH MATTERS WISE. IN THE PAST THEY CALLED THEM FOOLS AND MEN OF LITTLE CALIBER.
WHEN YOU USE YOUR MIND IN THIS WAY, YOU GET FARTHER FROM THE GREATEST HAPPINESS DAY BY DAY.
BUT THE MAN WHO HAS EVEN A GLIMPSE OF THE REGION OF THE GREATEST HAPPINESS HAS NO MIND TO PURSUE RICHES AND HONOR, OR GOOD FORTUNE AND HAPPINESS.
THE WISE MEN AND MEN OF NOBLE CHARACTER IN THE PAST WHO WERE WEALTHY AND EXALTED WERE RARE.

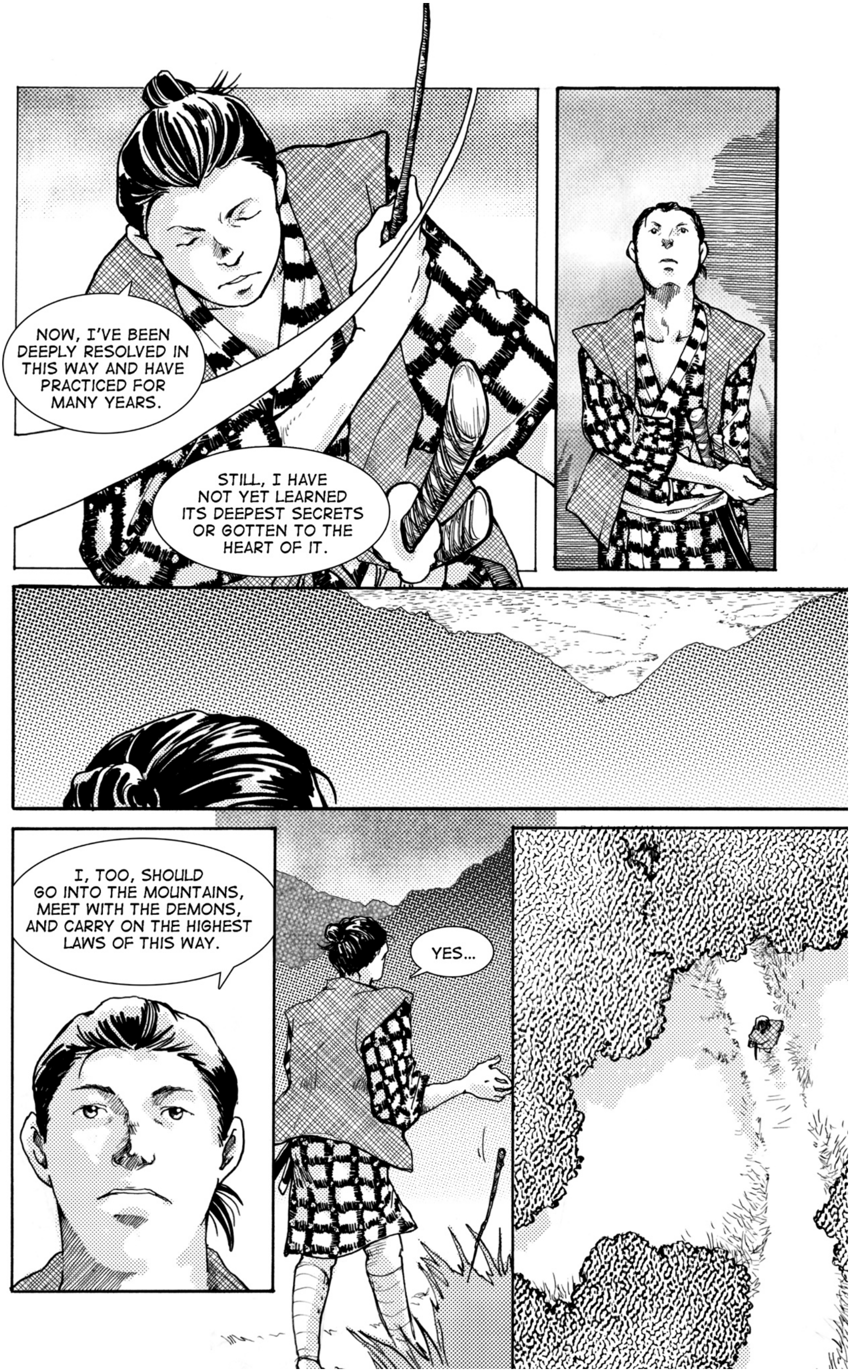

FROM TIME TO TIME THERE WERE MEN WHO RECEIVED HIGH RANK AND LARGE STIPENDS, NOT BECAUSE THEY PURSUED THEM, BUT BECAUSE THEIR VIRTUES WERE RECOGNIZED BY THEIR SUPERIORS.
BUT MINDS OF MEN OF LITTLE CALIBER SLANDERED AND DROVE THEM AWAY. THIS WAS NOT UNUSUAL IN EITHER CHINA OR JAPAN.
THEY WERE NOT HINDERED IN THE LEAST, AS FOR THEM TOSSING AWAY WEALTH, HONOR, PROSPERITY, AND STIPEND WAS LIKE THROWING AWAY BROKEN STRAW BOOTS.
THIS WAS BECAUSE WHAT THEY TREASURED WAS WITHIN THEMSELVES RATHER THAN WITHIN WEALTH, HONOR, PROSPERITY, AND STIPEND.
WISE MEN KNOW THAT SUCH THINGS ARE FETTERS AND BONDS, AND THERE WERE MANY MEN WHO TOOK THEIR LEAVE AND DID NOT RECEIVE THEM, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE OFFERED.

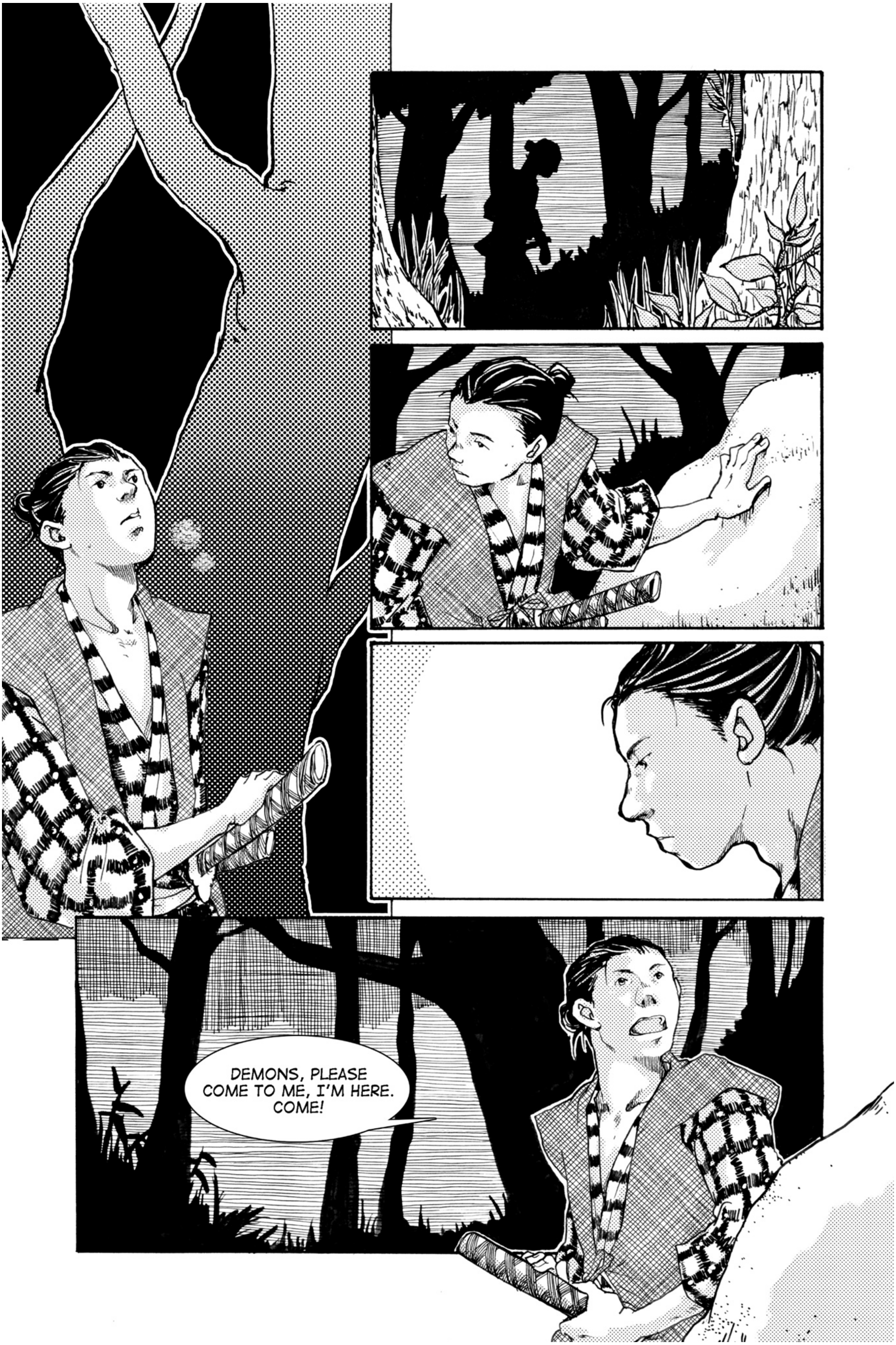

HSU YU, YEN TZE-LU, AND, AMONG THE CONFUCIANS, YEN YUAN, MIN TZE CH'IEN, AND CH'I CHANG-K'AI WERE OF THIS SORT.

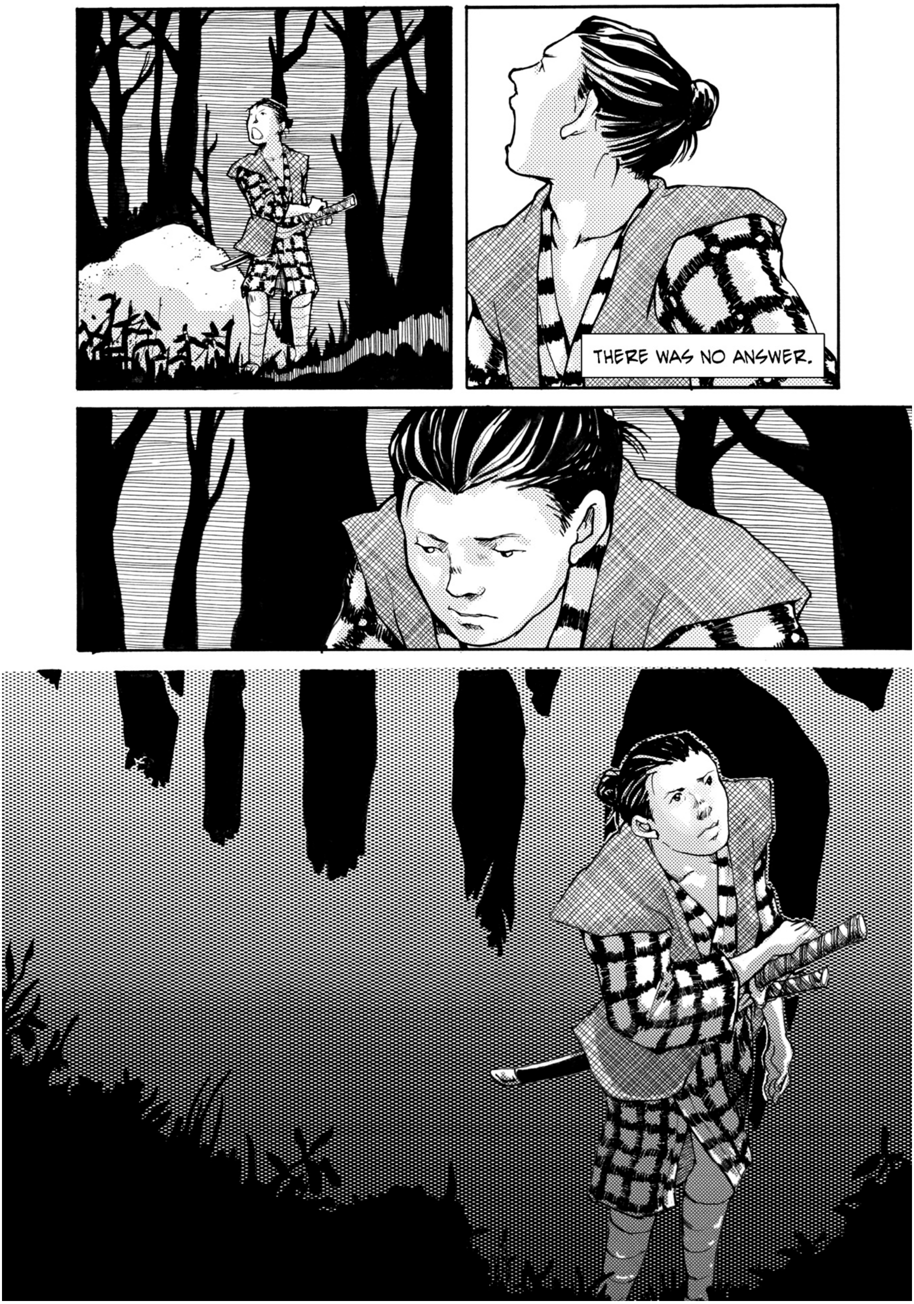
THE DEMON'S SERMON

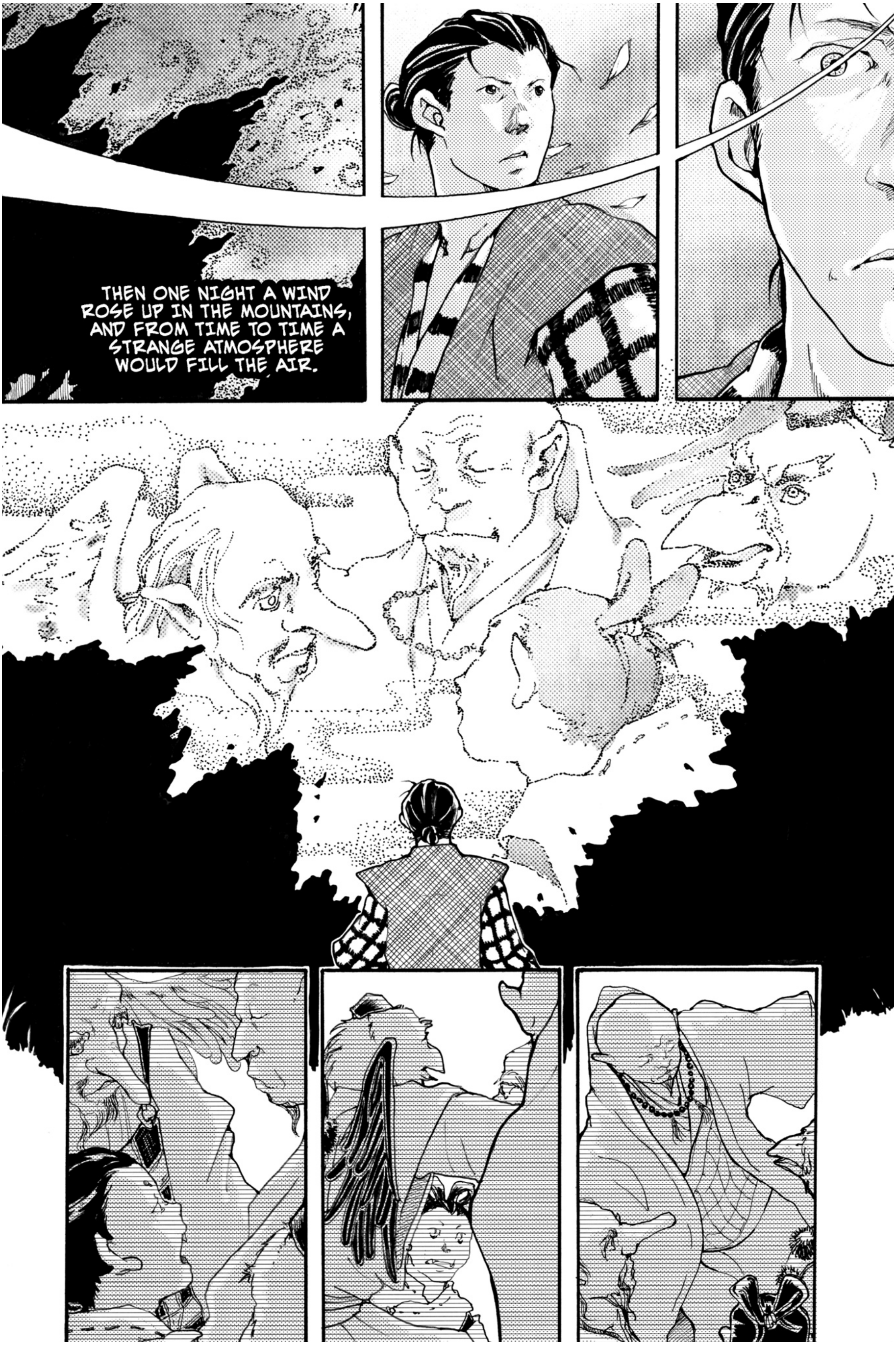
PART 2

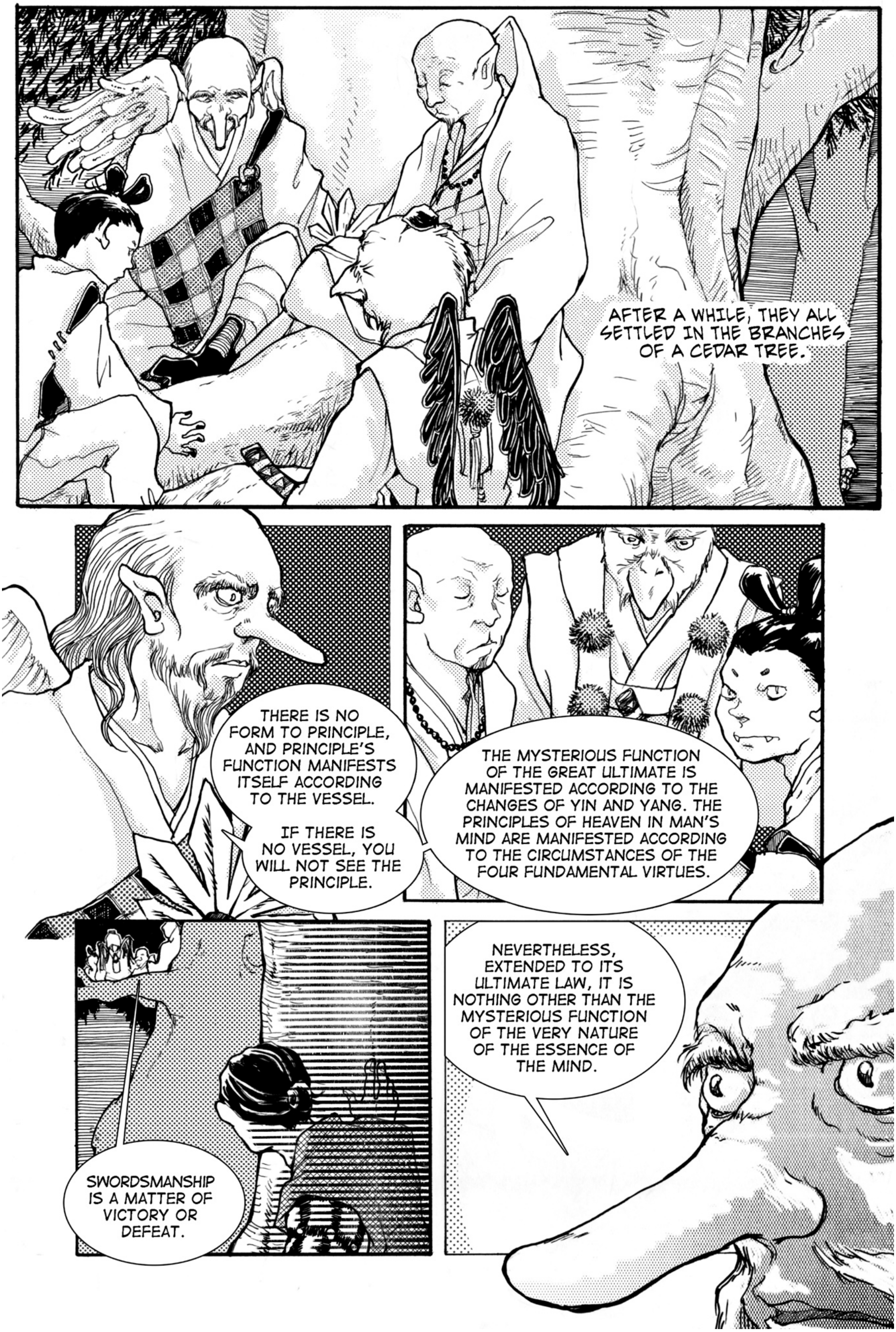

ONCE THERE WAS A SWORDSMAN PONDERING HIS SITUATION.
THERE IS A STORY THAT, LONG AGO, WHEN MINAMOTO YOSHITSUNE WAS STILL CALLED USHIWAKAMARU, HE WENT DEEP INTO MT. KURAMA...
WHERE HE MET WITH DEMONS BOTH LARGE AND SMALL, AND LEARNED THE DEEPEST SECRETS OF SWORDSMANSHIP.
LATER, HE MET THE BANDIT CHIEF KUMASAKA AT THE AKASAKA POST TOWN IN THE PROVINCE OF MINO...
SINGLE-HANDEDLY ROUTED A LARGE COMPANY OF EVIL BRIGANDS, AND KILLED KUMASAKA.

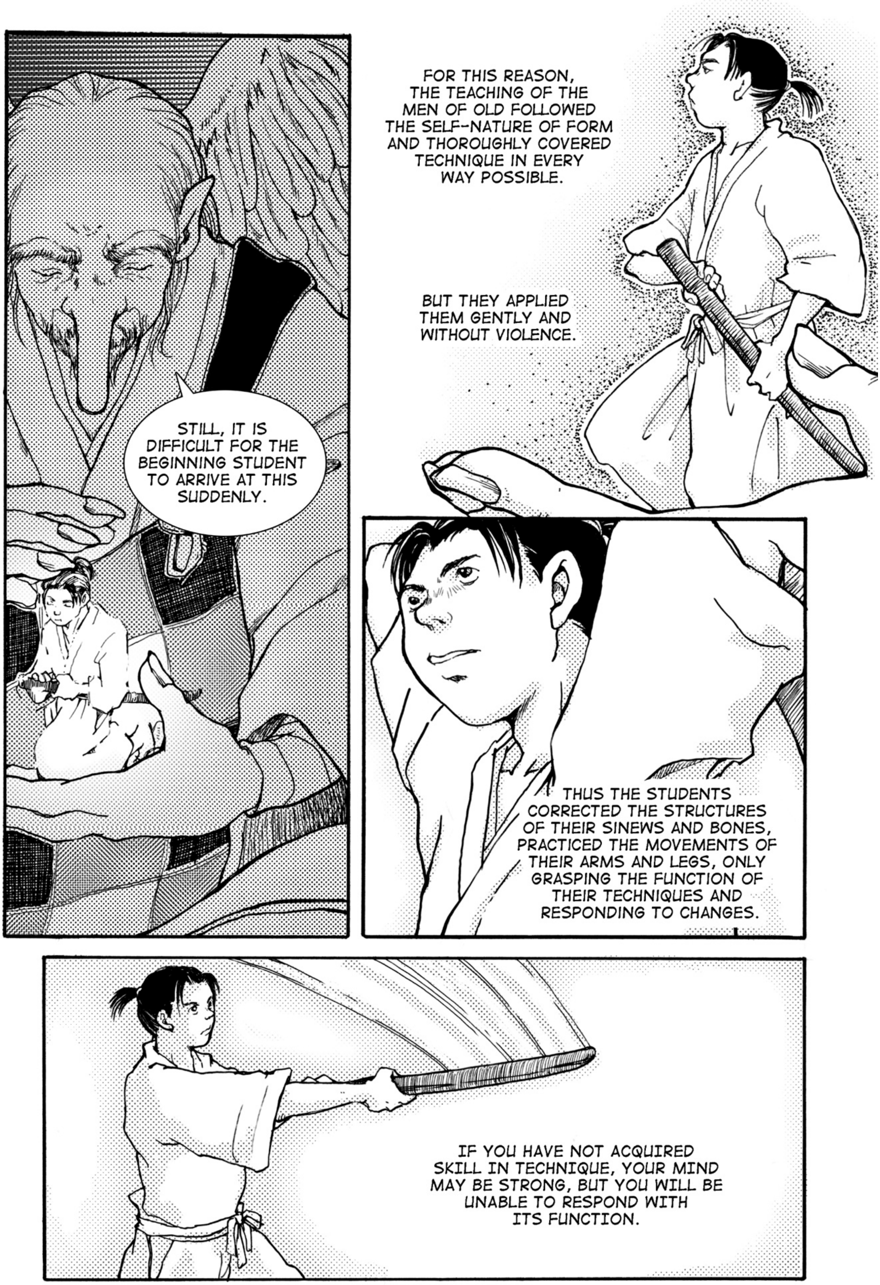

NOW, I'VE BEEN DEEPLY RESOLVED IN THIS WAY AND HAVE PRACTICED FOR MANY YEARS.
STILL, I HAVE NOT YET LEARNED ITS DEEPEST SECRETS OR GOTTEN TO THE HEART OF IT.
I, TOO, SHOULD GO INTO THE MOUNTAINS, MEET WITH THE DEMONS, AND CARRY ON THE HIGHEST LAWS OF THIS WAY.
YES...

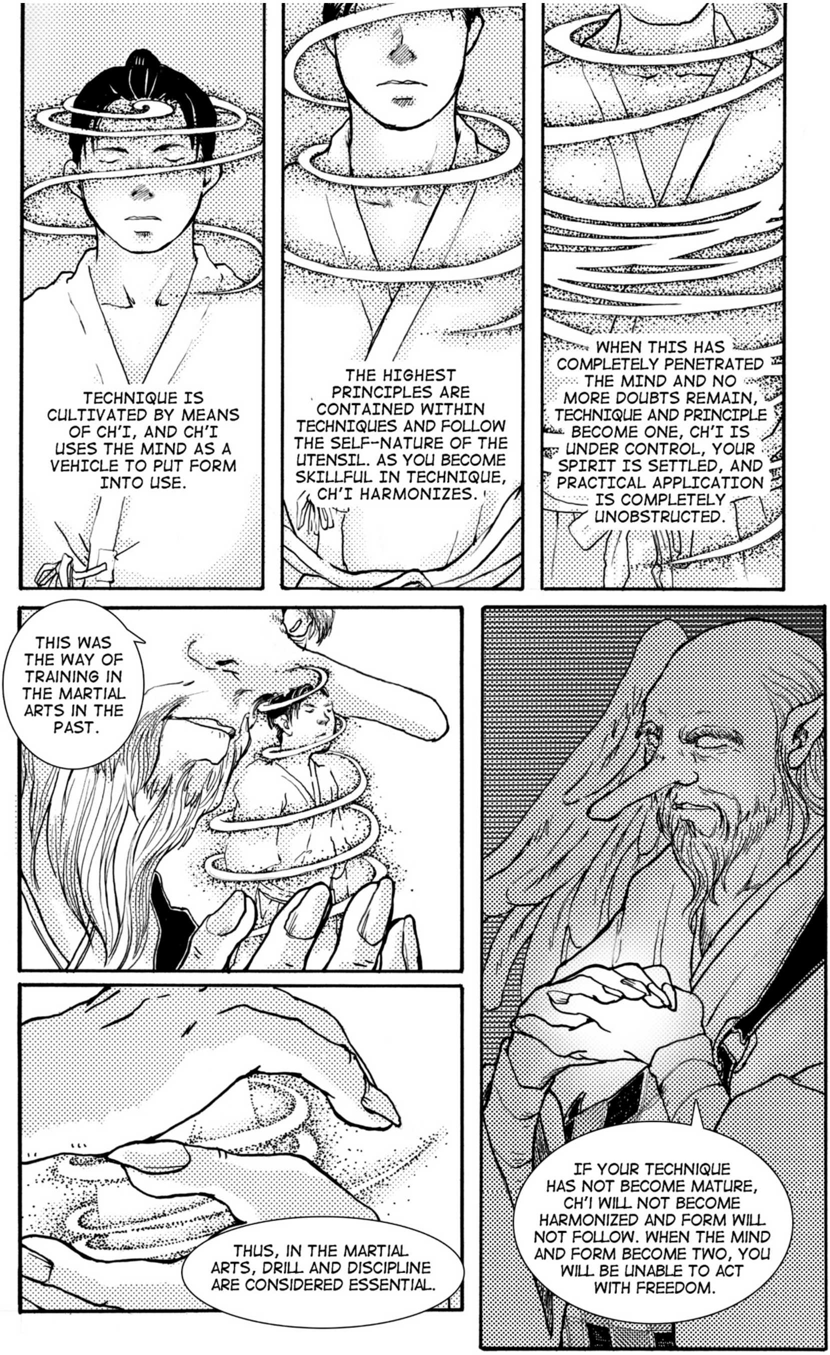

DEMONS, PLEASE COME TO ME, I'M HERE. COME!

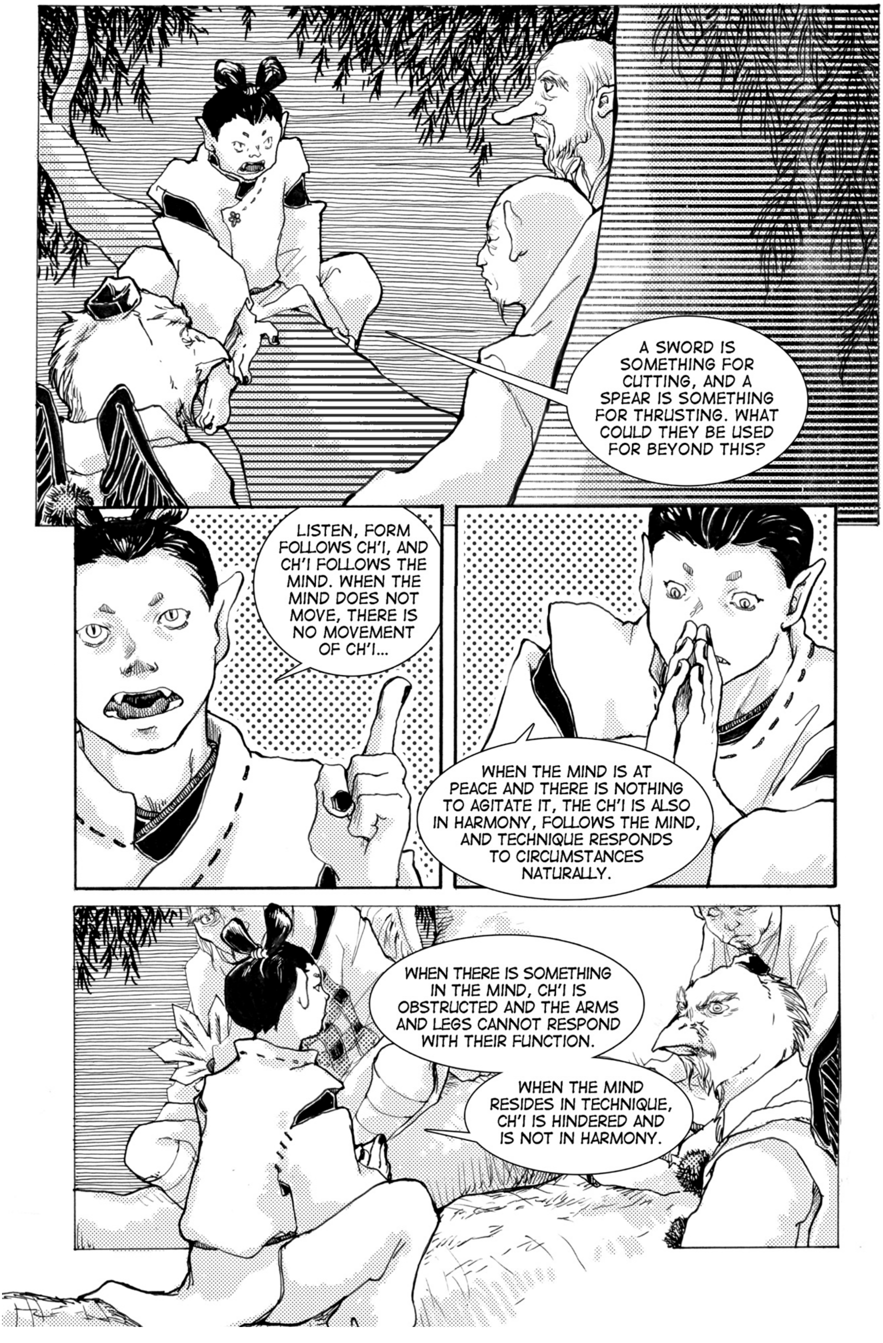

THERE WAS NO ANSWER.

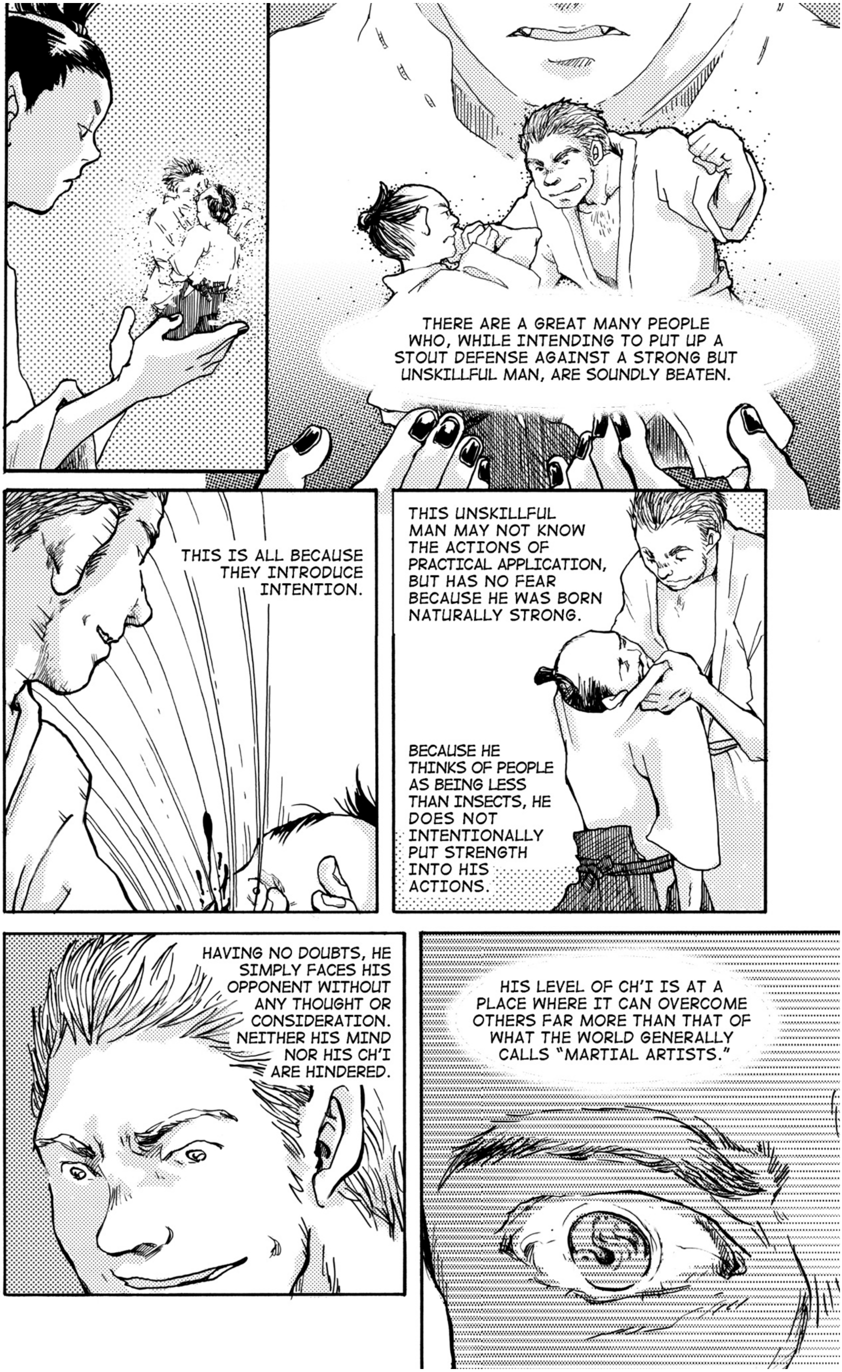

THEN ONE NIGHT A WIND ROSE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND FROM TIME TO TIME A STRANGE ATMOSPHERE WOULD FILL THE AIR.

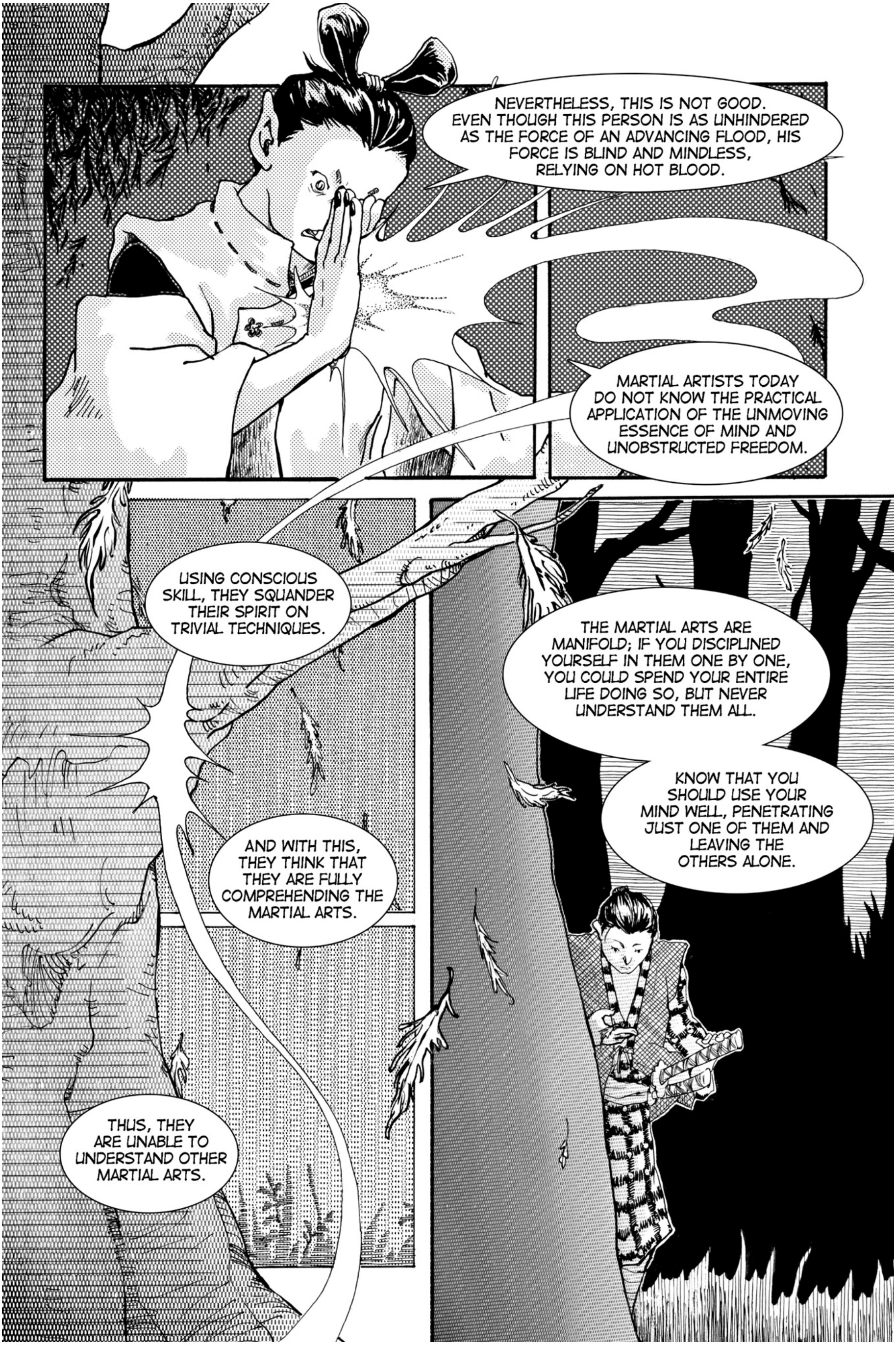

AFTER A WHILE, THEY ALL SETTLED IN THE BRANCHES OF A CEDAR TREE.
THERE IS NO FORM TO PRINCIPLE, AND PRINCIPLE'S FUNCTION MANIFESTS ITSELF ACCORDING TO THE VESSEL.
IF THERE IS NO VESSEL, YOU WILL NOT SEE THE PRINCIPLE.
THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTION OF THE GREAT ULTIMATE IS MANIFESTED ACCORDING TO THE CHANGES OF YIN AND YANG. THE PRINCIPLES OF HEAVEN IN MAN'S MIND ARE MANIFESTED ACCORDING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUES.
SWORDSMANSHIP IS A MATTER OF VICTORY OR DEFEAT.
NEVERTHELESS, EXTENDED TO ITS ULTIMATE LAW, IT IS NOTHING OTHER THAN THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTION OF THE VERY NATURE OF THE ESSENCE OF THE MIND.

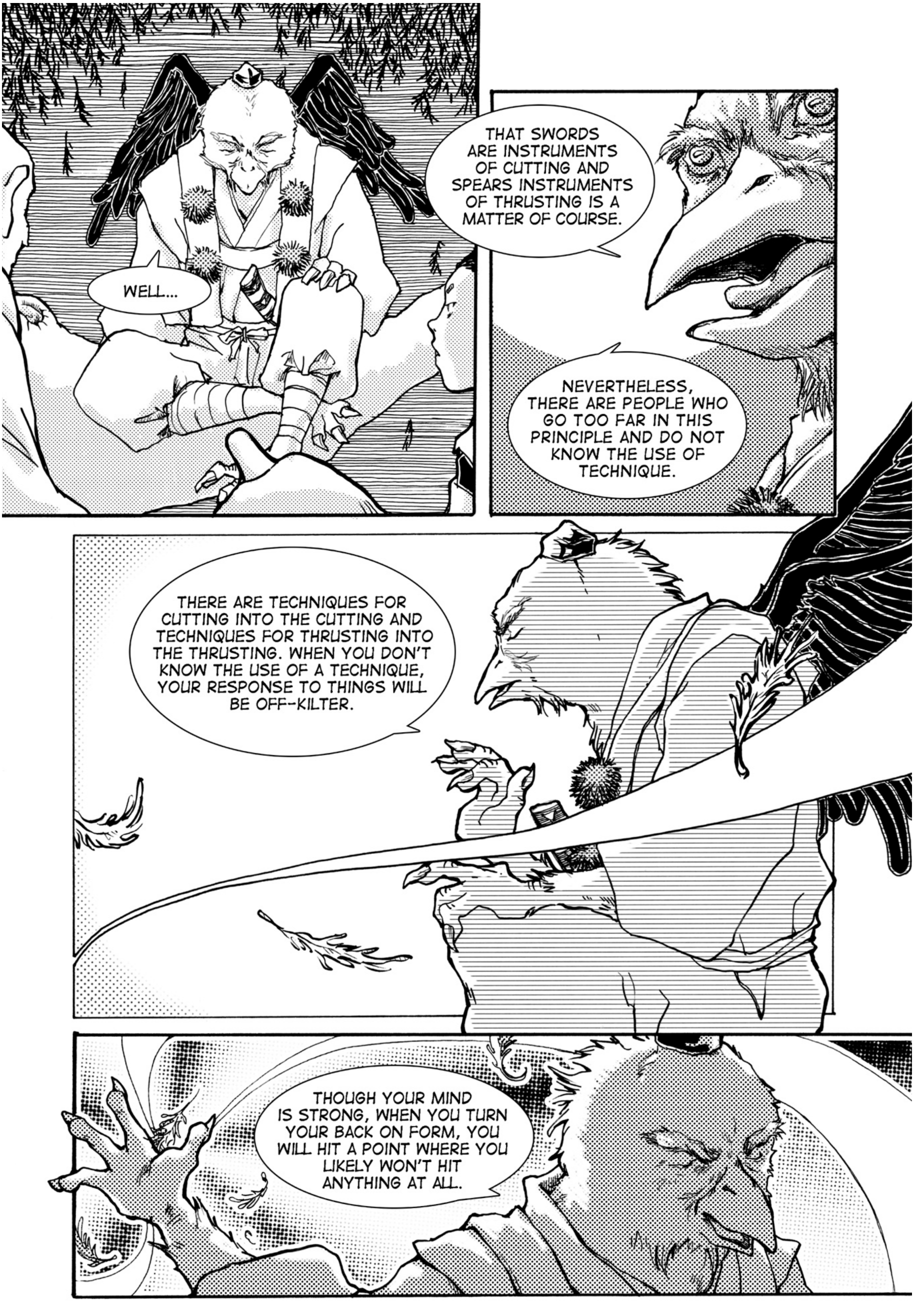

Still, it is difficult for the beginning student to arrive at this suddenly.
For this reason, the teaching of the men of old followed the self-nature of form and thoroughly covered technique in every way possible.
But they applied them gently and without violence.
Thus the students corrected the structures of their sinews and bones, practiced the movements of their arms and legs, only grasping the function of their techniques and responding to changes.
If you have not acquired skill in technique, your mind may be strong, but you will be unable to respond with its function.

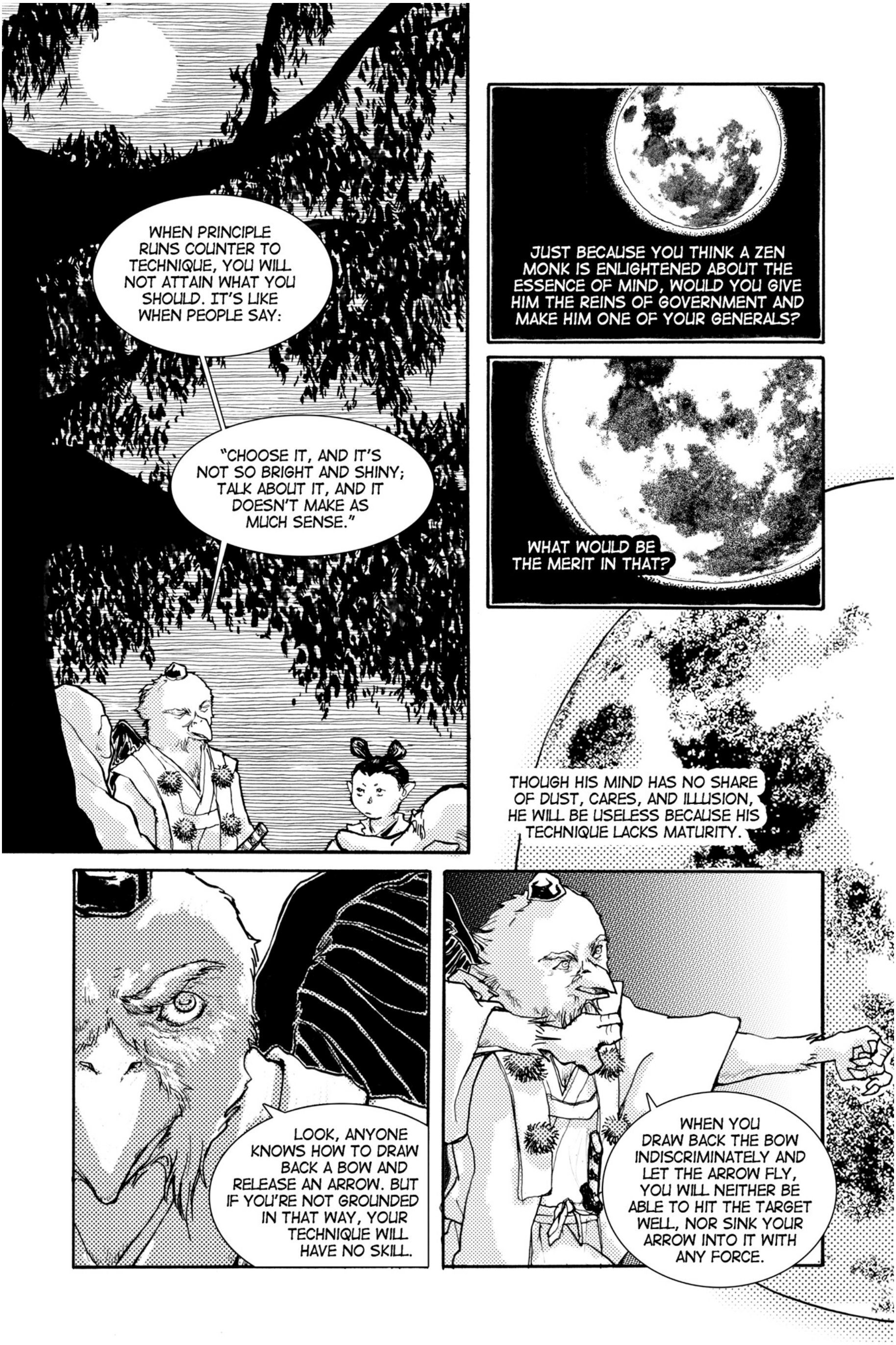

TECHNIQUE IS CULTIVATED BY MEANS OF CH'I, AND CH'I USES THE MIND AS A VEHICLE TO PUT FORM INTO USE.
THE HIGHEST PRINCIPLES ARE CONTAINED WITHIN TECHNIQUES AND FOLLOW THE SELF-NATURE OF THE UTENSIL. AS YOU BECOME SKILLFUL IN TECHNIQUE, CH'I HARMONIZES.
WHEN THIS HAS COMPLETELY PENETRATED THE MIND AND NO MORE DOUBTS REMAIN, TECHNIQUE AND PRINCIPLE BECOME ONE, CH'I IS UNDER CONTROL, YOUR SPIRIT IS SETTLED, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION IS COMPLETELY UNOBSTRUCTED.
THIS WAS THE WAY OF TRAINING IN THE MARTIAL ARTS IN THE PAST.
IF YOUR TECHNIQUE HAS NOT BECOME MATURE, CH'I WILL NOT BECOME HARMONIZED AND FORM WILL NOT FOLLOW. WHEN THE MIND AND FORM BECOME TWO, YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO ACT WITH FREEDOM.
THUS, IN THE MARTIAL ARTS, DRILL AND DISCIPLINE ARE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL.

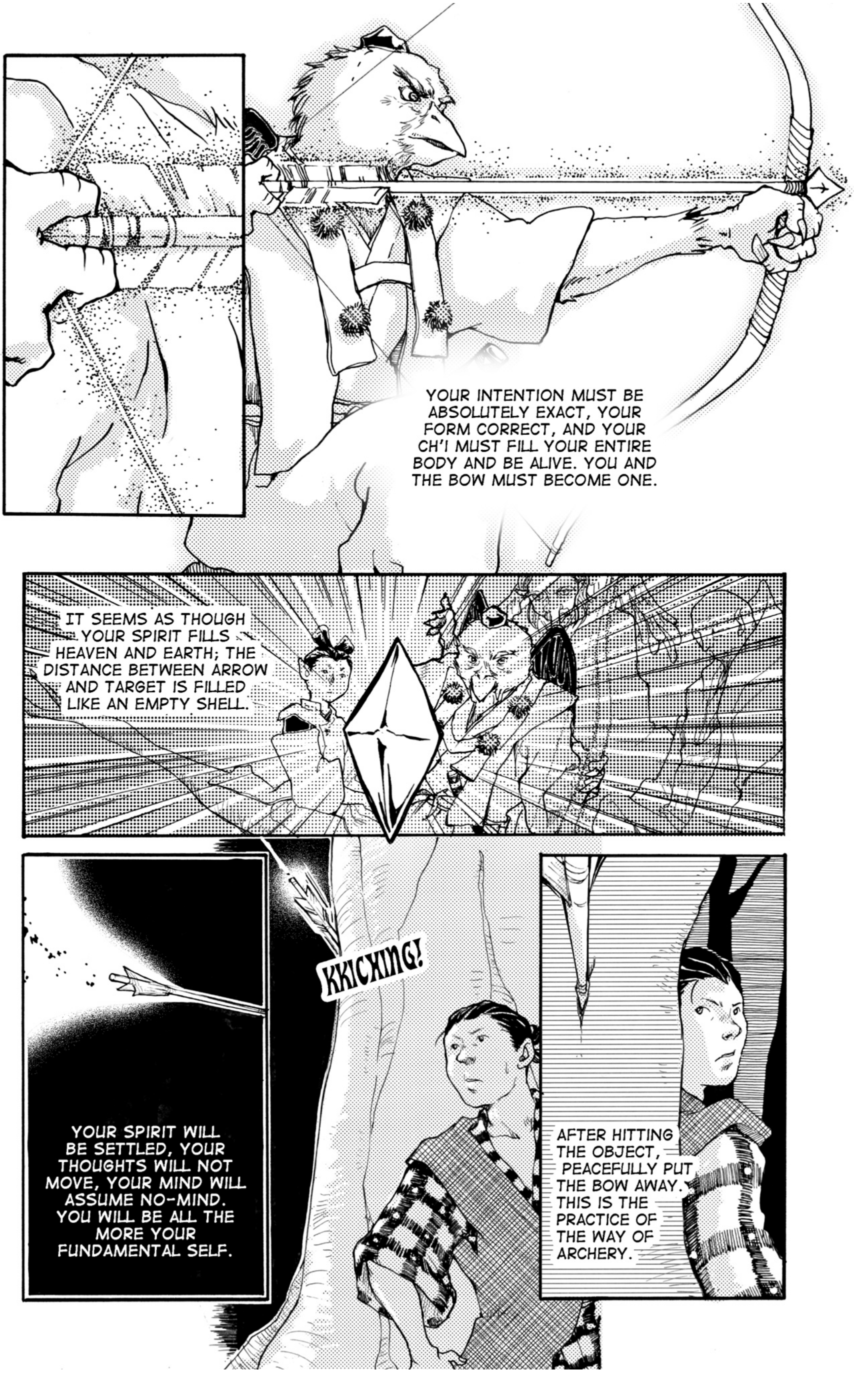

A SWORD IS SOMETHING FOR CUTTING, AND A SPEAR IS SOMETHING FOR THRUSTING. WHAT COULD THEY BE USED FOR BEYOND THIS?
LISTEN, FORM FOLLOWS CH'I, AND CH'I FOLLOWS THE MIND. WHEN THE MIND DOES NOT MOVE, THERE IS NO MOVEMENT OF CH'I...
WHEN THE MIND IS AT PEACE AND THERE IS NOTHING TO AGITATE IT, THE CH'I IS ALSO IN HARMONY, FOLLOWS THE MIND, AND TECHNIQUE RESPONDS TO CIRCUMSTANCES NATURALLY.
WHEN THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE MIND, CH'I IS OBSTRUCTED AND THE ARMS AND LEGS CANNOT RESPOND WITH THEIR FUNCTION.
WHEN THE MIND RESIDES IN TECHNIQUE, CH'I IS HINDERED AND IS NOT IN HARMONY.

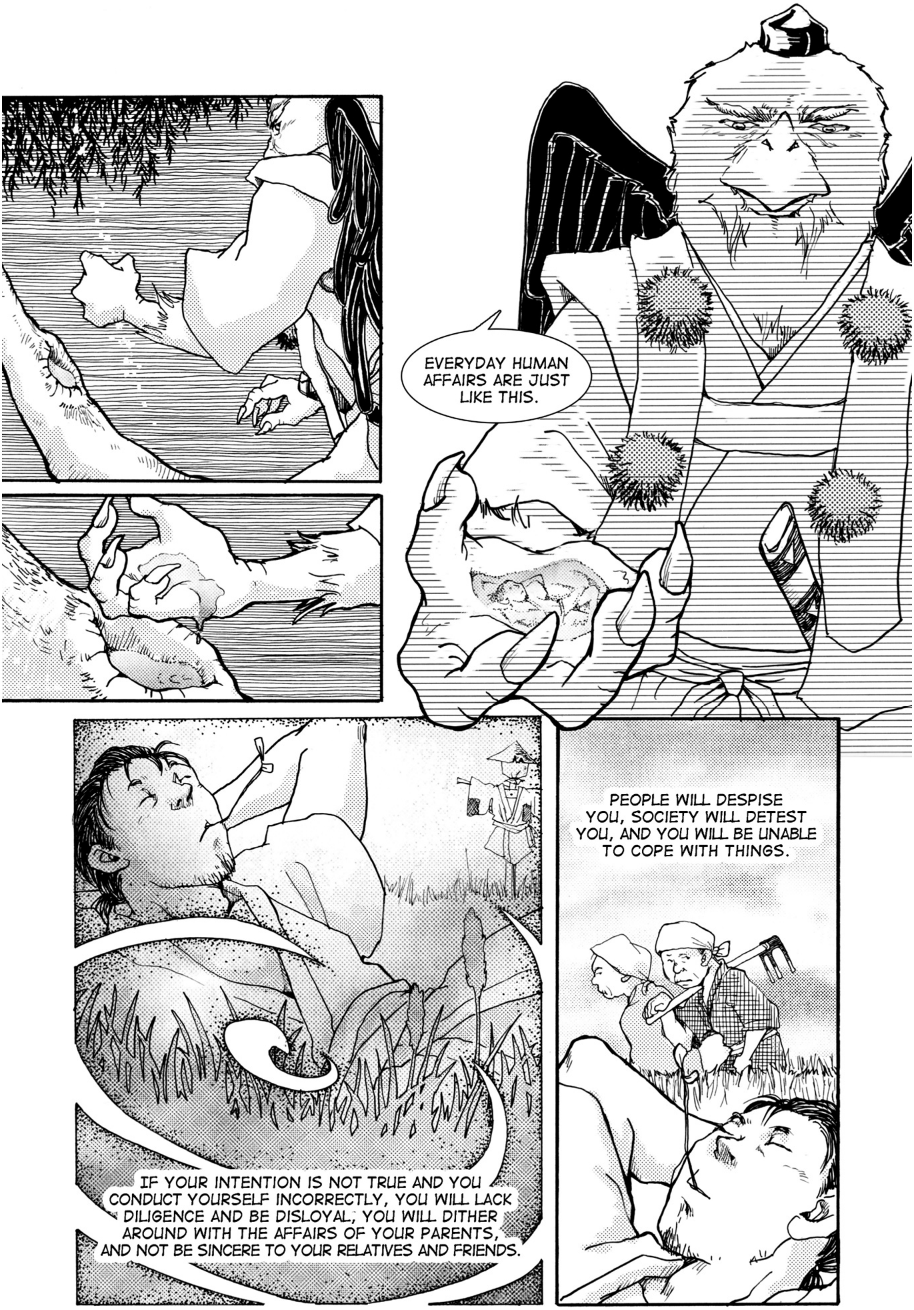

THERE ARE A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WHO, WHILE INTENDING TO PUT UP A STOUT DEFENSE AGAINST A STRONG BUT UNSKILLFUL MAN, ARE SOUNDLY BEATEN.
THIS IS ALL BECAUSE THEY INTRODUCE INTENTION.
THIS UNSKILLFUL MAN MAY NOT KNOW THE ACTIONS OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION, BUT HAS NO FEAR BECAUSE HE WAS BORN NATURALLY STRONG.
BECAUSE HE THINKS OF PEOPLE AS BEING LESS THAN INSECTS, HE DOES NOT INTENTIONALLY PUT STRENGTH INTO HIS ACTIONS.
HAVING NO DOUBTS, HE SIMPLY FACES HIS OPPONENT WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OR CONSIDERATION. NEITHER HIS MIND NOR HIS CH'I ARE HINDERED.
HIS LEVEL OF CH'I IS AT A PLACE WHERE IT CAN OVERCOME OTHERS FAR MORE THAN THAT OF WHAT THE WORLD GENERALLY CALLS "MARTIAL ARTISTS."

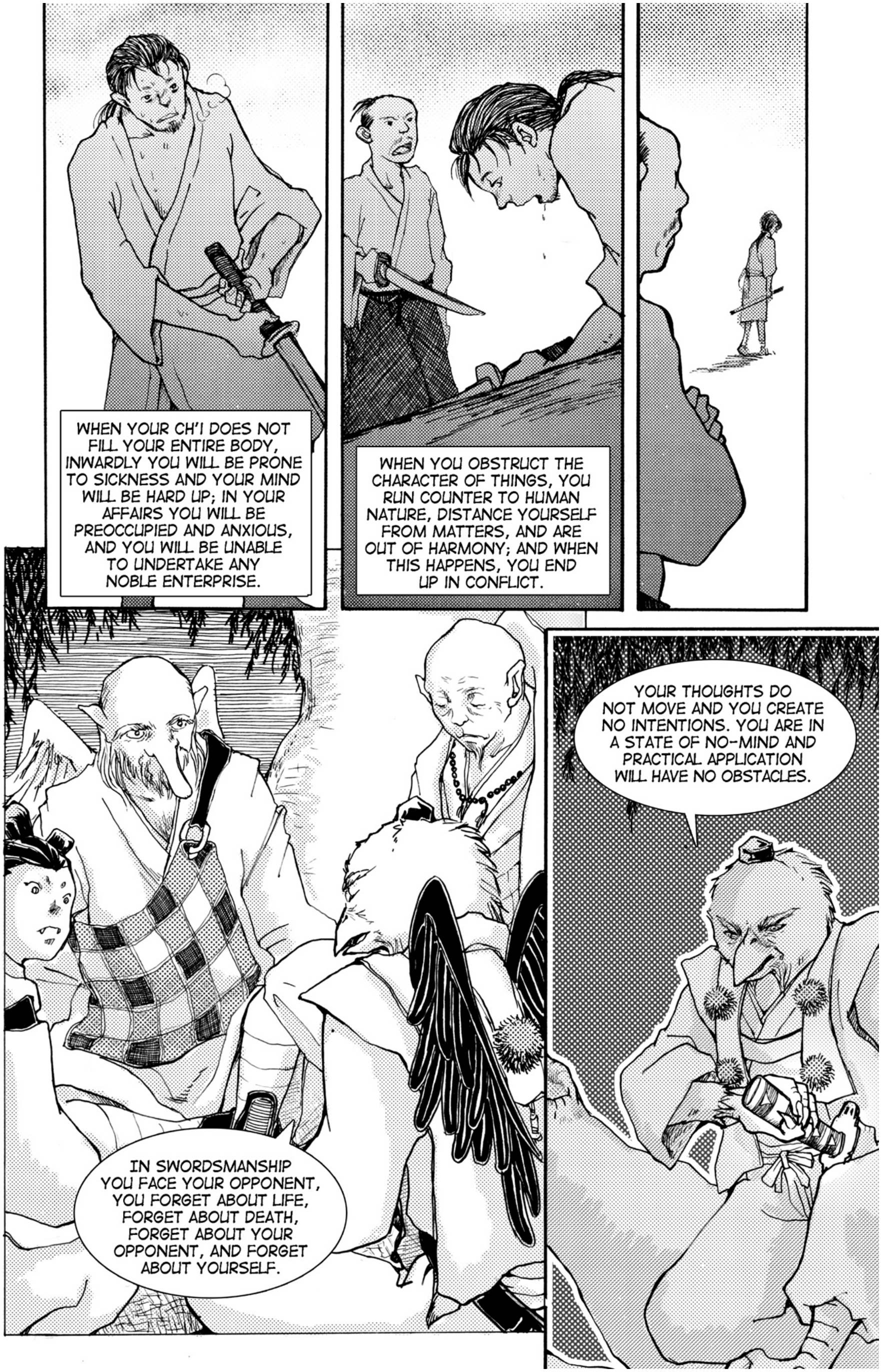

NEVERTHELESS, THIS IS NOT GOOD. EVEN THOUGH THIS PERSON IS AS UNHINDERED AS THE FORCE OF AN ADVANCING FLOOD, HIS FORCE IS BLIND AND MINDLESS, RELYING ON HOT BLOOD.
MARTIAL ARTISTS TODAY DO NOT KNOW THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE UNMOVING ESSENCE OF MIND AND UNOBSTRUCTED FREEDOM.
USING CONSCIOUS SKILL, THEY SQUANDER THEIR SPIRIT ON TRIVIAL TECHNIQUES.
AND WITH THIS, THEY THINK THAT THEY ARE FULLY COMPREHENDING THE MARTIAL ARTS.
THUS, THEY ARE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND OTHER MARTIAL ARTS.
THE MARTIAL ARTS ARE MANIFOLD; IF YOU DISCIPLINED YOURSELF IN THEM ONE BY ONE, YOU COULD SPEND YOUR ENTIRE LIFE DOING SO, BUT NEVER UNDERSTAND THEM ALL.
KNOW THAT YOU SHOULD USE YOUR MIND WELL, PENETRATING JUST ONE OF THEM AND LEAVING THE OTHERS ALONE.

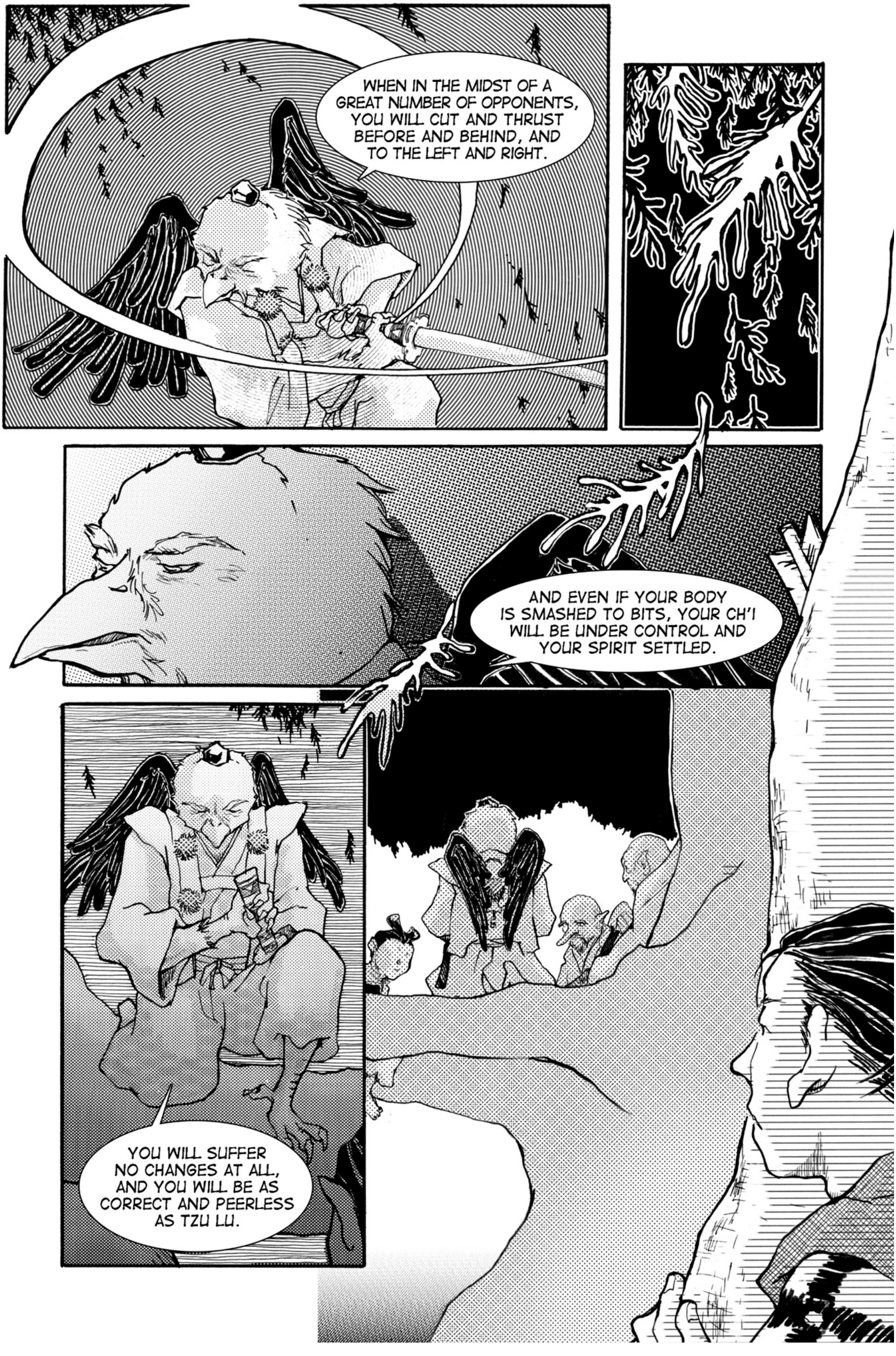

WELL...
THAT SWORDS ARE INSTRUMENTS OF CUTTING AND SPEARS INSTRUMENTS OF THRUSTING IS A MATTER OF COURSE.
NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO GO TOO FAR IN THIS PRINCIPLE AND DO NOT KNOW THE USE OF TECHNIQUE.
THERE ARE TECHNIQUES FOR CUTTING INTO THE CUTTING AND TECHNIQUES FOR THRUSTING INTO THE THRUSTING. WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW THE USE OF A TECHNIQUE, YOUR RESPONSE TO THINGS WILL BE OFF-KILTER.
THOUGH YOUR MIND IS STRONG, WHEN YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON FORM, YOU WILL HIT A POINT WHERE YOU LIKELY WON'T HIT ANYTHING AT ALL.


WHEN PRINCIPLE RUNS COUNTER TO TECHNIQUE, YOU WILL NOT ATTAIN WHAT YOU SHOULD. IT'S LIKE WHEN PEOPLE SAY:
"CHOOSE IT, AND IT'S NOT SO BRIGHT AND SHINY; TALK ABOUT IT, AND IT DOESN'T MAKE AS MUCH SENSE."
JUST BECAUSE YOU THINK A ZEN MONK IS ENLIGHTENED ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF MIND, WOULD YOU GIVE HIM THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT AND MAKE HIM ONE OF YOUR GENERALS?
WHAT WOULD BE THE MERIT IN THAT?
THOUGH HIS MIND HAS NO SHARE OF DUST, CARES, AND ILLUSION, HE WILL BE USELESS BECAUSE HIS TECHNIQUE LACKS MATURITY.
LOOK, ANYONE KNOWS HOW TO DRAW BACK A BOW AND RELEASE AN ARROW. BUT IF YOU'RE NOT GROUNDED IN THAT WAY, YOUR TECHNIQUE WILL HAVE NO SKILL.
WHEN YOU DRAW BACK THE BOW INDISCRIMINATELY AND LET THE ARROW FLY, YOU WILL NEITHER BE ABLE TO HIT THE TARGET WELL, NOR SINK YOUR ARROW INTO IT WITH ANY FORCE.

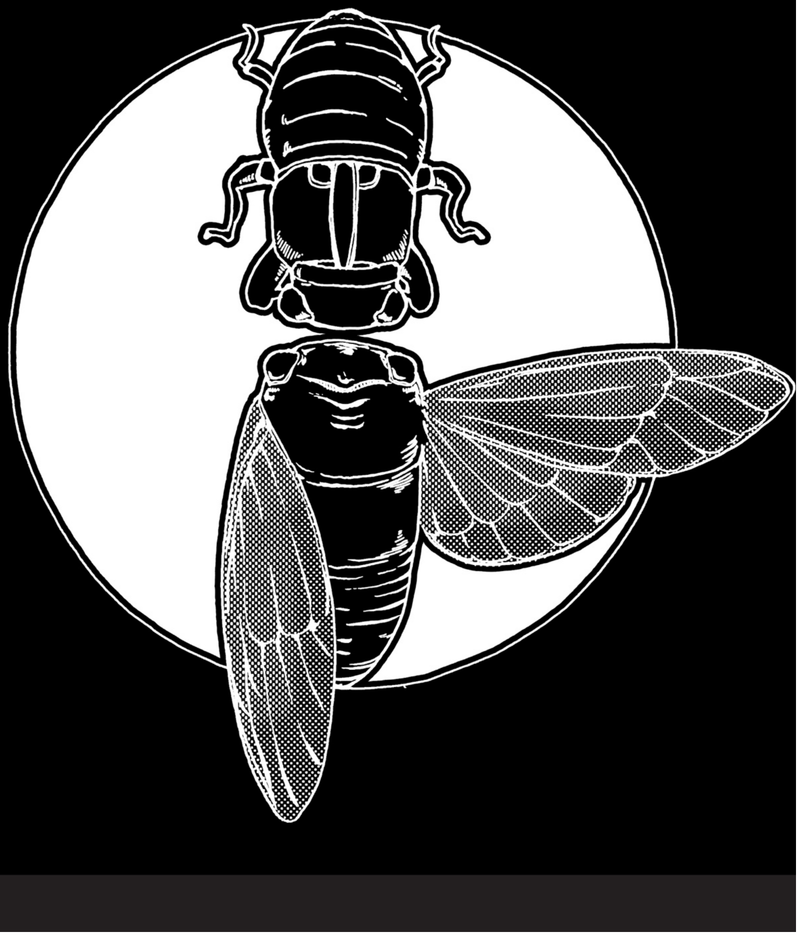

YOUR INTENTION MUST BE ABSOLUTELY EXACT, YOUR FORM CORRECT, AND YOUR CH'I MUST FILL YOUR ENTIRE BODY AND BE ALIVE. YOU AND THE BOW MUST BECOME ONE.
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH YOUR SPIRIT FILLS HEAVEN AND EARTH; THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ARROW AND TARGET IS FILLED LIKE AN EMPTY SHELL.
KKICHING!
YOUR SPIRIT WILL BE SETTLED, YOUR THOUGHTS WILL NOT MOVE, YOUR MIND WILL ASSUME NO-MIND. YOU WILL BE ALL THE MORE YOUR FUNDAMENTAL SELF.
AFTER HITTING THE OBJECT, PEACEFULLY PUT THE BOW AWAY. THIS IS THE PRACTICE OF THE WAY OF ARCHERY.

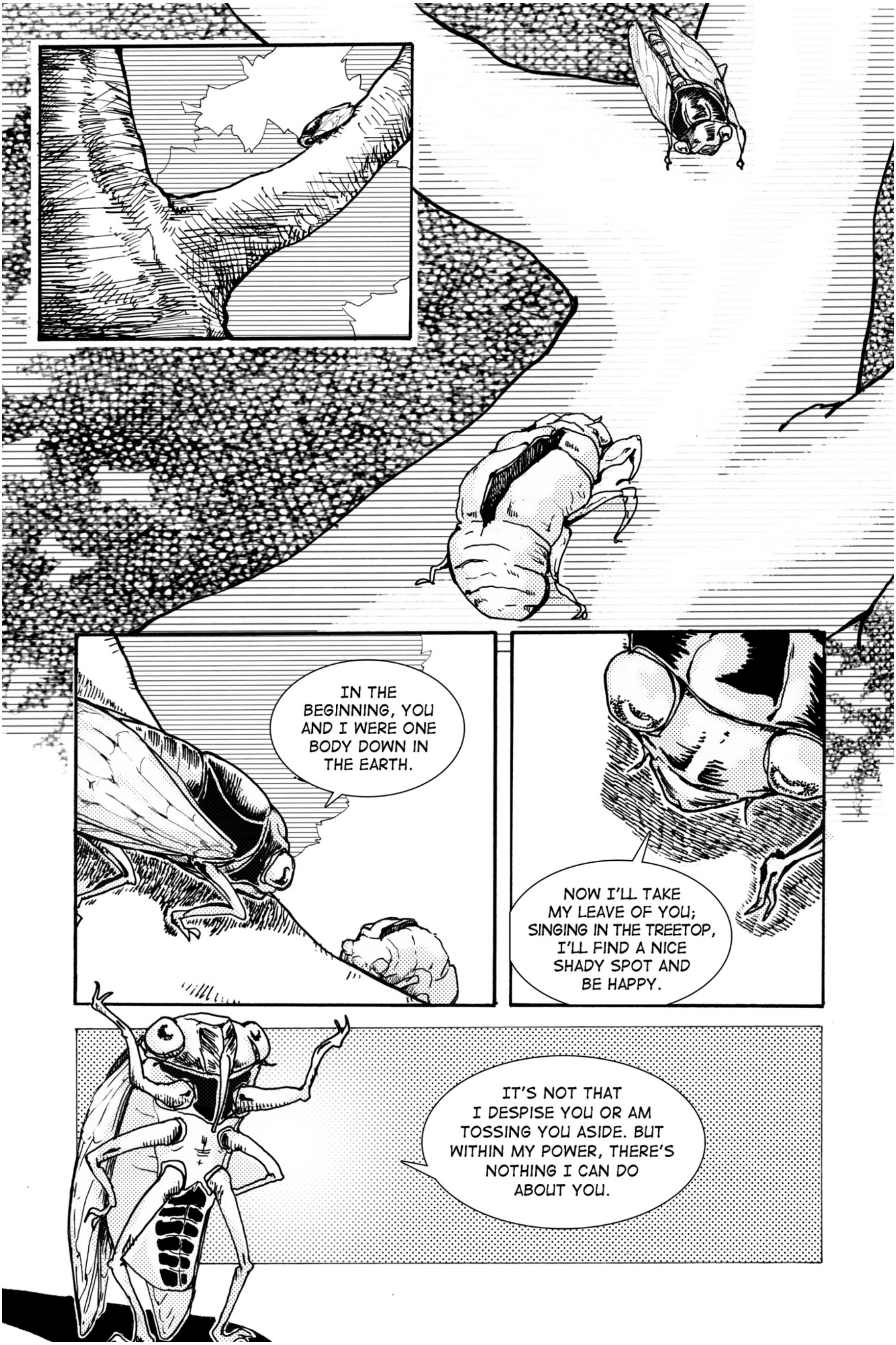

EVERYDAY HUMAN AFFAIRS ARE JUST LIKE THIS.
IF YOUR INTENTION IS NOT TRUE AND YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF INCORRECTLY, YOU WILL LACK DILIGENCE AND BE DISLOYAL, YOU WILL DITHER AROUND WITH THE AFFAIRS OF YOUR PARENTS, AND NOT BE SINCERE TO YOUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.
PEOPLE WILL DESPISE YOU, SOCIETY WILL DETEST YOU, AND YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO COPE WITH THINGS.

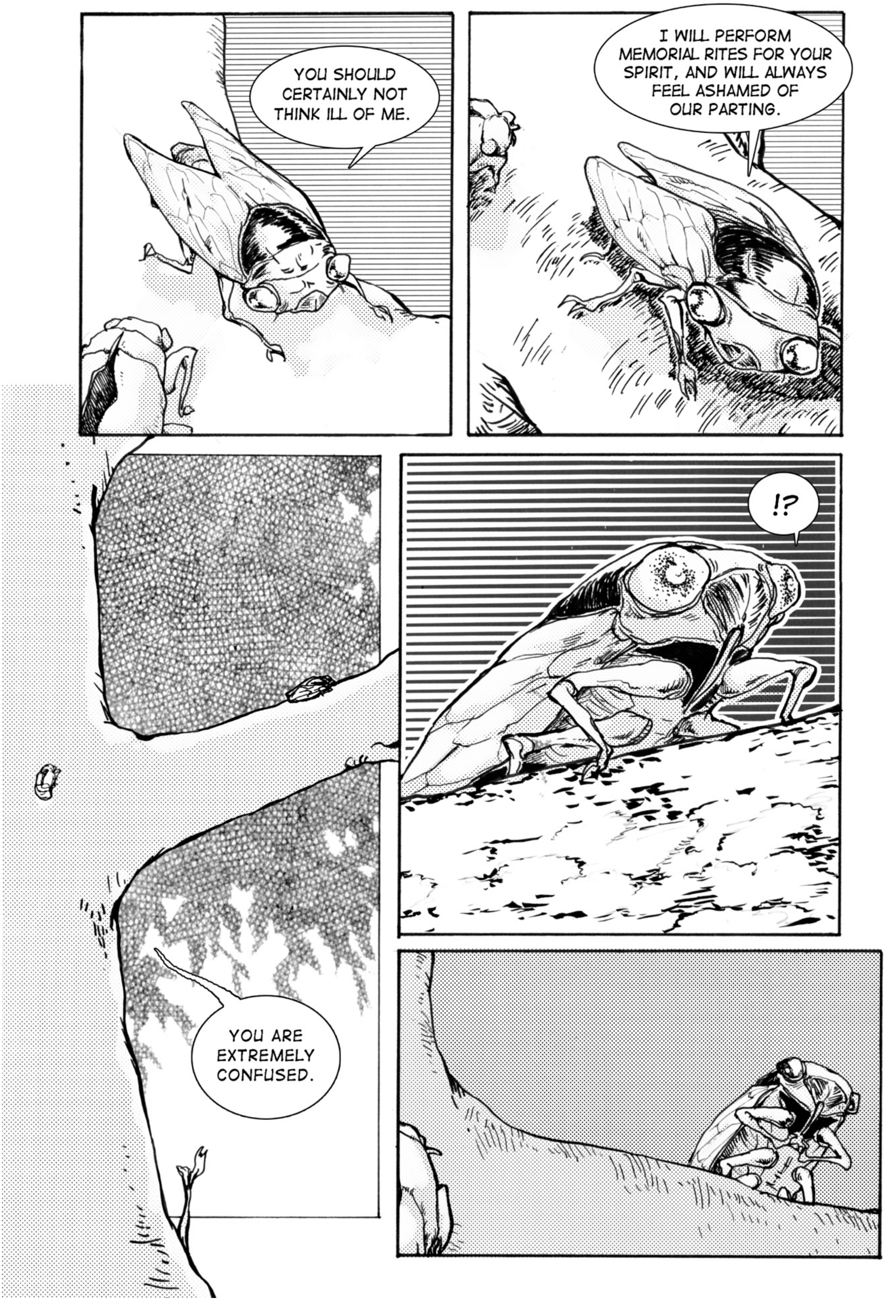

WHEN YOUR CH'I DOES NOT FILL YOUR ENTIRE BODY, INWARDLY YOU WILL BE PRONE TO SICKNESS AND YOUR MIND WILL BE HARD UP; IN YOUR AFFAIRS YOU WILL BE PREOCCUPIED AND ANXIOUS, AND YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO UNDERTAKE ANY NOBLE ENTERPRISE.
WHEN YOU OBSTRUCT THE CHARACTER OF THINGS, YOU RUN COUNTER TO HUMAN NATURE, DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM MATTERS, AND ARE OUT OF HARMONY; AND WHEN THIS HAPPENS, YOU END UP IN CONFLICT.
IN SWORDSMANSHIP YOU FACE YOUR OPPONENT, YOU FORGET ABOUT LIFE, FORGET ABOUT DEATH, FORGET ABOUT YOUR OPPONENT, AND FORGET ABOUT YOURSELF.
YOUR THOUGHTS DO NOT MOVE AND YOU CREATE NO INTENTIONS. YOU ARE IN A STATE OF NO-MIND AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION WILL HAVE NO OBSTACLES.

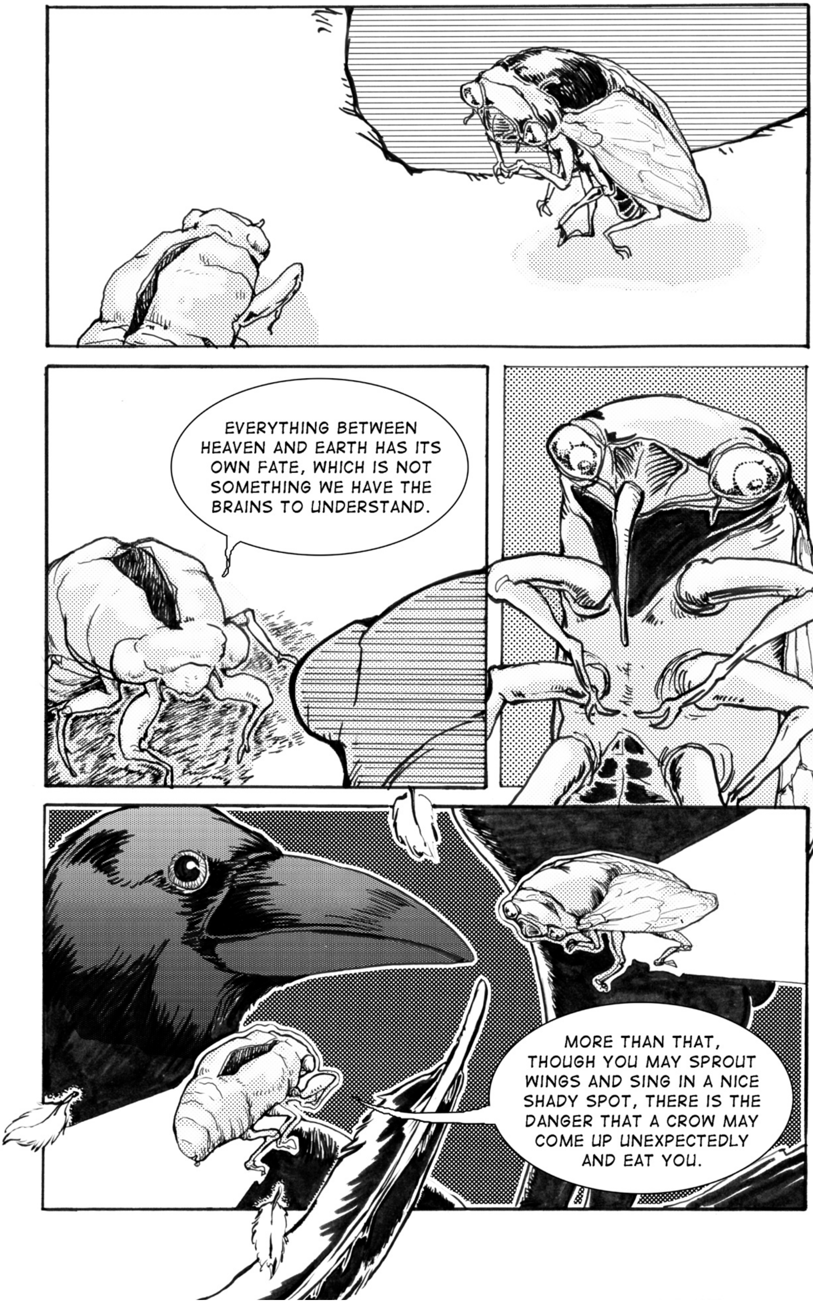

WHEN IN THE MIDST OF A GREAT NUMBER OF OPPONENTS, YOU WILL CUT AND THRUST BEFORE AND BEHIND, AND TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT.
AND EVEN IF YOUR BODY IS SMASHED TO BITS, YOUR CH'I WILL BE UNDER CONTROL AND YOUR SPIRIT SETTLED.
YOU WILL SUFFER NO CHANGES AT ALL, AND YOU WILL BE AS CORRECT AND PEERLESS AS TZU LU.

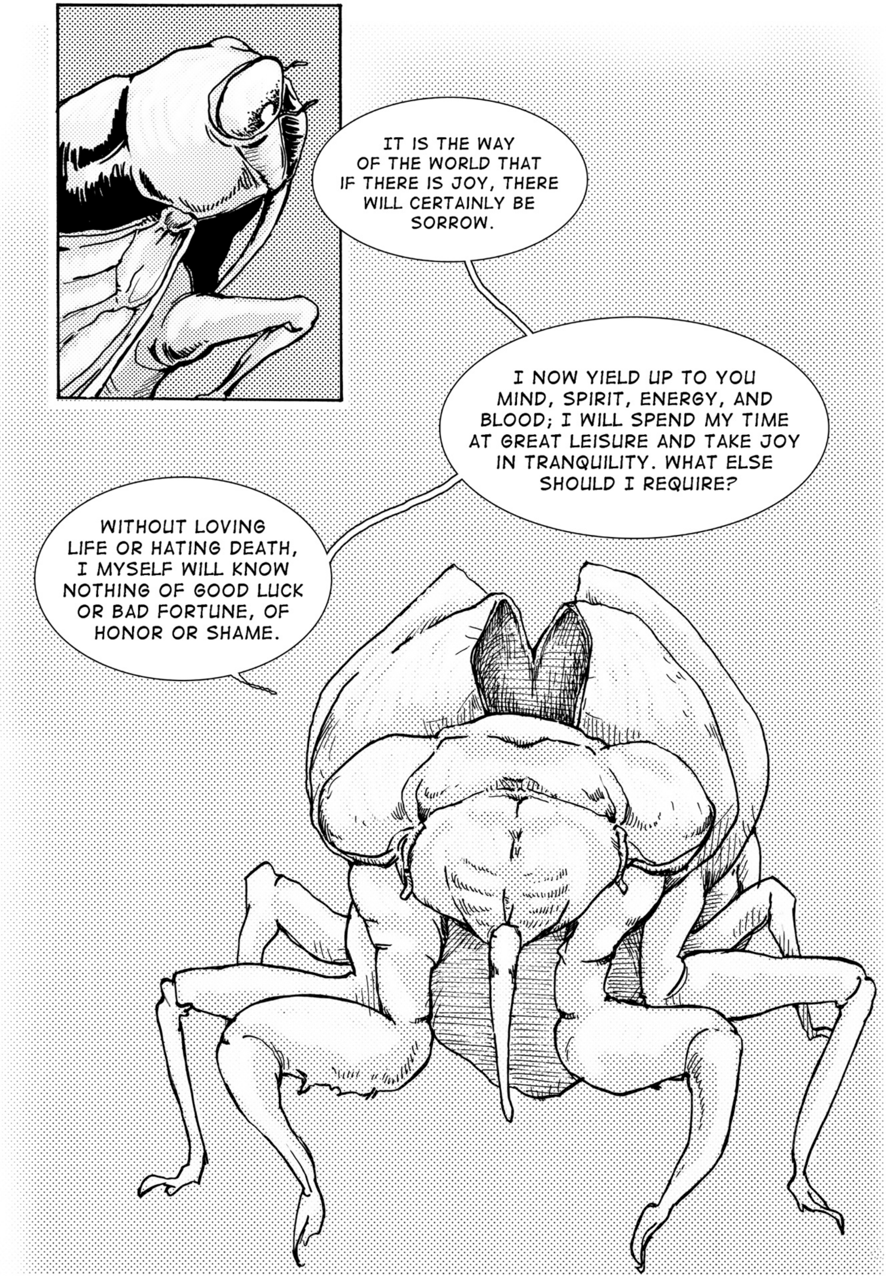
THE GREATEST JOYS OF THE CICADA AND ITS CAST-OFF SHELL

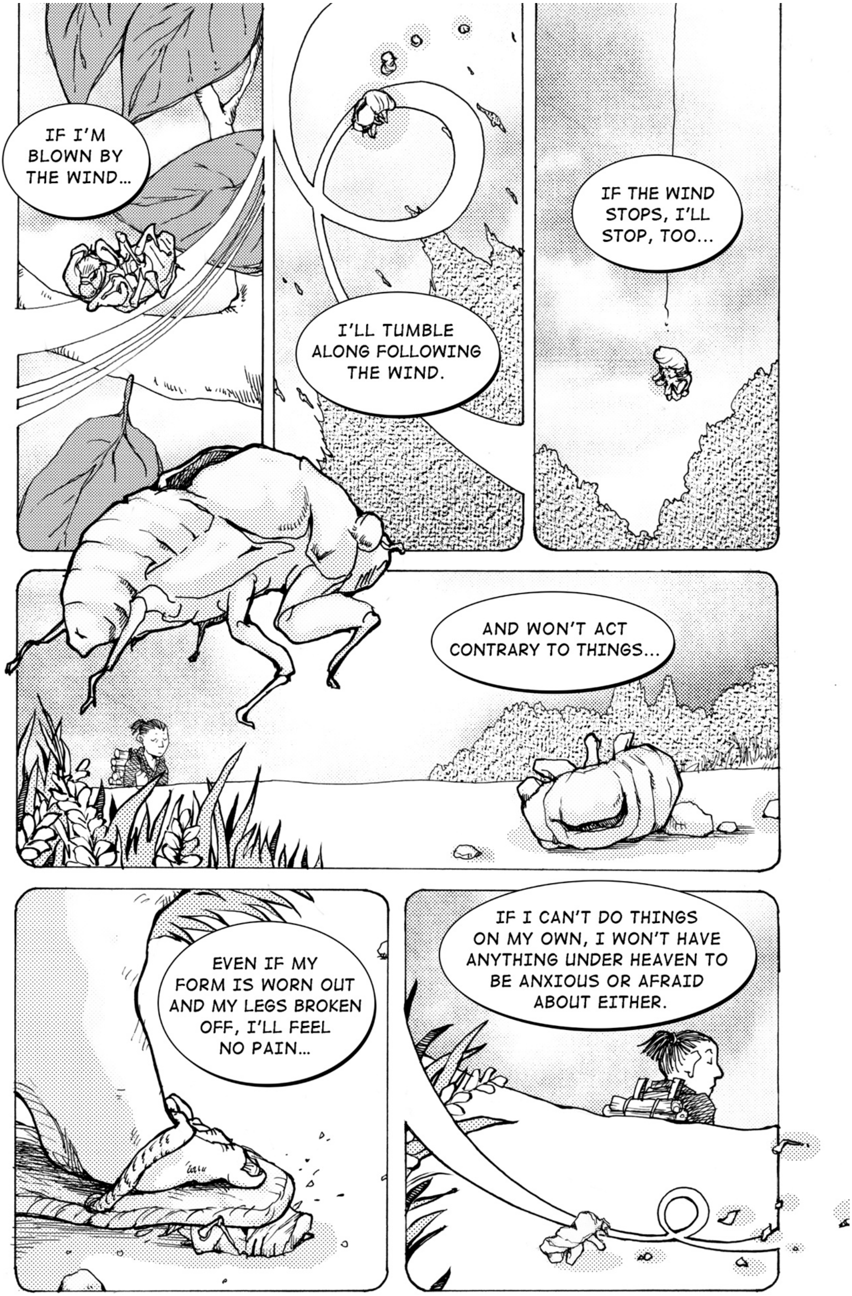


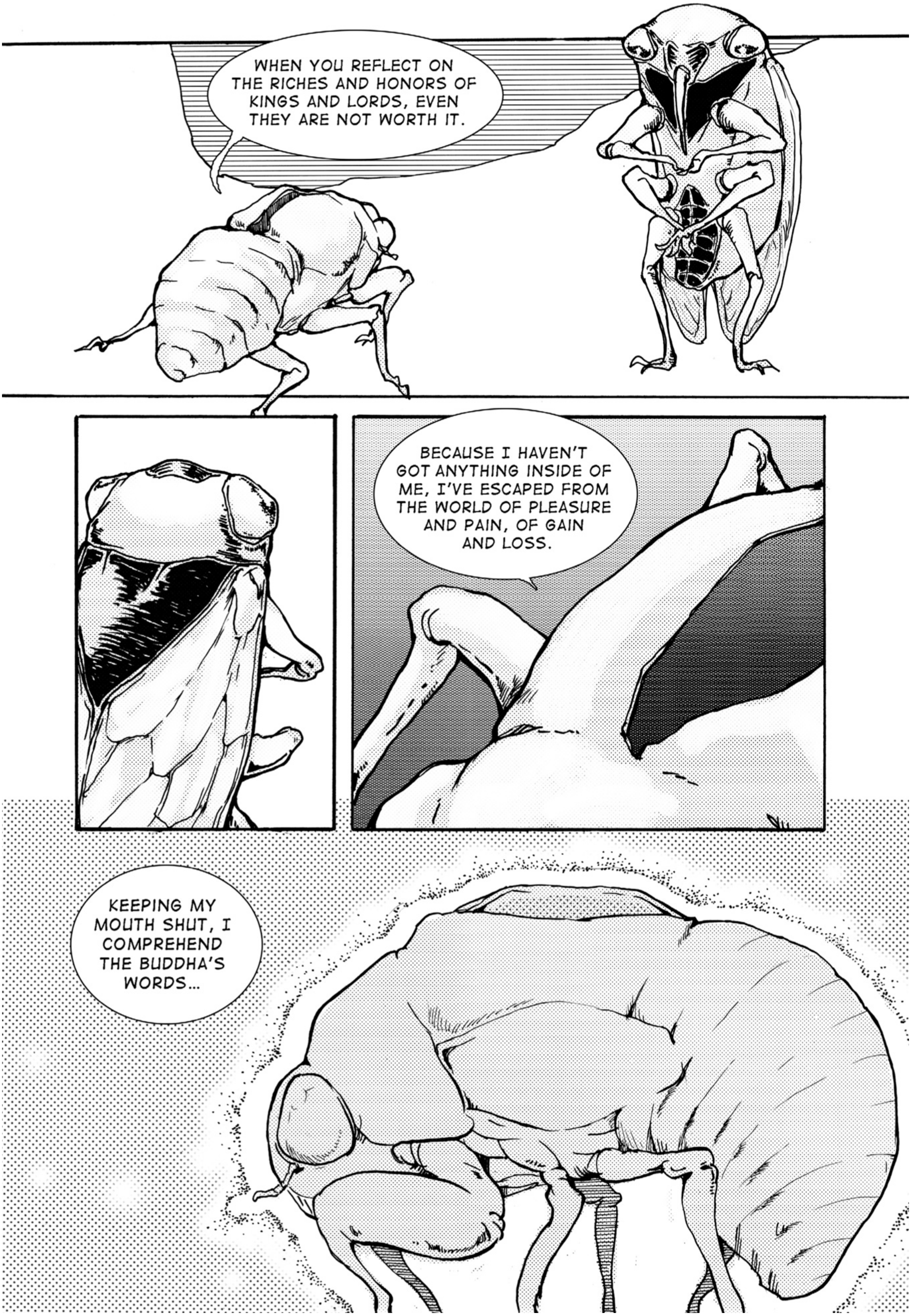

IN THE BEGINNING, YOU AND I WERE ONE BODY DOWN IN THE EARTH.
NOW I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOU; SINGING IN THE TREETOP, I'LL FIND A NICE SHADY SPOT AND BE HAPPY.
IT'S NOT THAT I DESPISE YOU OR AM TOSSING YOU ASIDE. BUT WITHIN MY POWER, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT YOU.

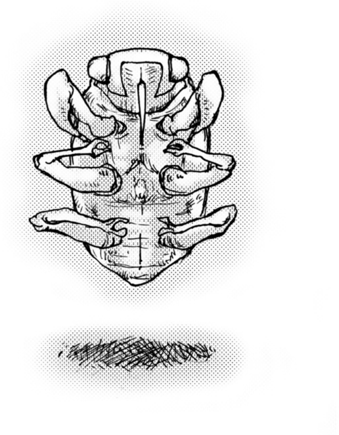

YOU SHOULD CERTAINLY NOT THINK ILL OF ME.
I WILL PERFORM MEMORIAL RITES FOR YOUR SPIRIT, AND WILL ALWAYS FEEL ASHAMED OF OUR PARTING.
!?
YOU ARE EXTREMELY CONFUSED.


EVERYTHING BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH HAS ITS OWN FATE, WHICH IS NOT SOMETHING WE HAVE THE BRAINS TO UNDERSTAND.
MORE THAN THAT, THOUGH YOU MAY SPROUT WINGS AND SING IN A NICE SHADY SPOT, THERE IS THE DANGER THAT A CROW MAY COME UP UNEXPECTEDLY AND EAT YOU.

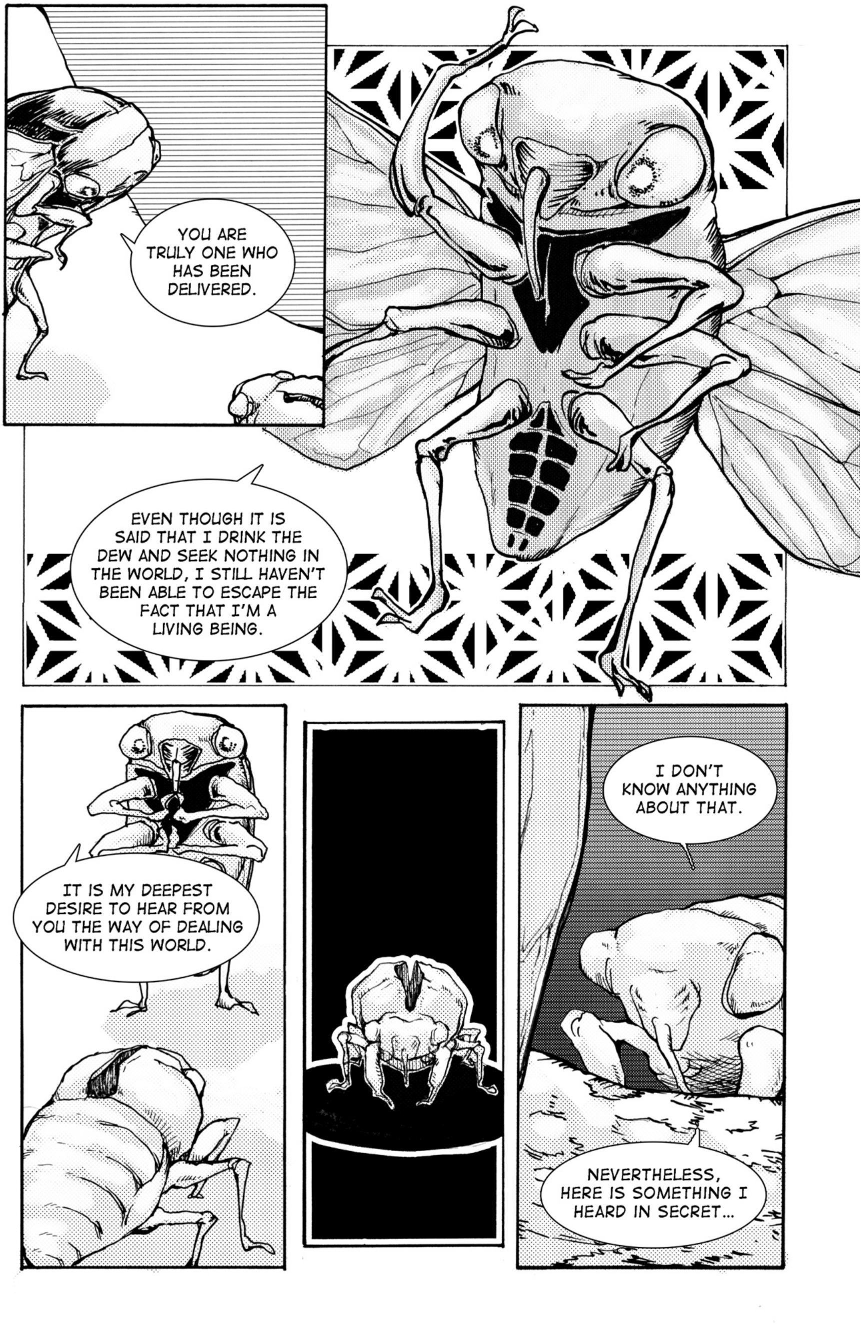

IT IS THE WAY OF THE WORLD THAT IF THERE IS JOY, THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE SORROW.
I NOW YIELD UP TO YOU MIND, SPIRIT, ENERGY, AND BLOOD; I WILL SPEND MY TIME AT GREAT LEISURE AND TAKE JOY IN TRANQUILITY. WHAT ELSE SHOULD I REQUIRE?
WITHOUT LOVING LIFE OR HATING DEATH, I MYSELF WILL KNOW NOTHING OF GOOD LUCK OR BAD FORTUNE, OF HONOR OR SHAME.

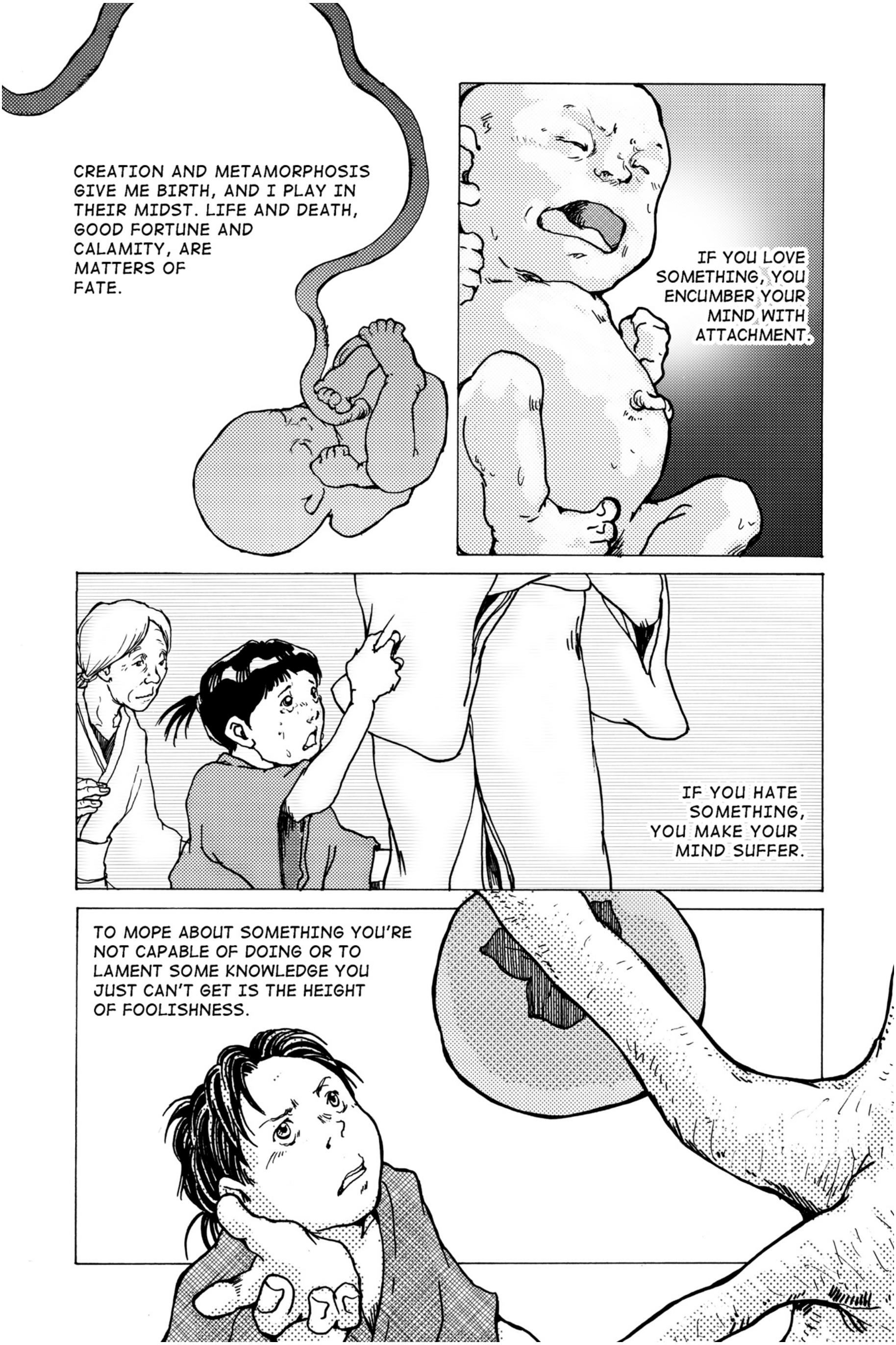

IF I'M BLOWN BY THE WIND...
I'LL TUMBLE ALONG FOLLOWING THE WIND.
IF THE WIND STOPS, I'LL STOP, TOO...
AND WON'T ACT CONTRARY TO THINGS...
EVEN IF MY FORM IS WORN OUT AND MY LEGS BROKEN OFF, I'LL FEEL NO PAIN...
IF I CAN'T DO THINGS ON MY OWN, I WON'T HAVE ANYTHING UNDER HEAVEN TO BE ANXIOUS OR AFRAID ABOUT EITHER.

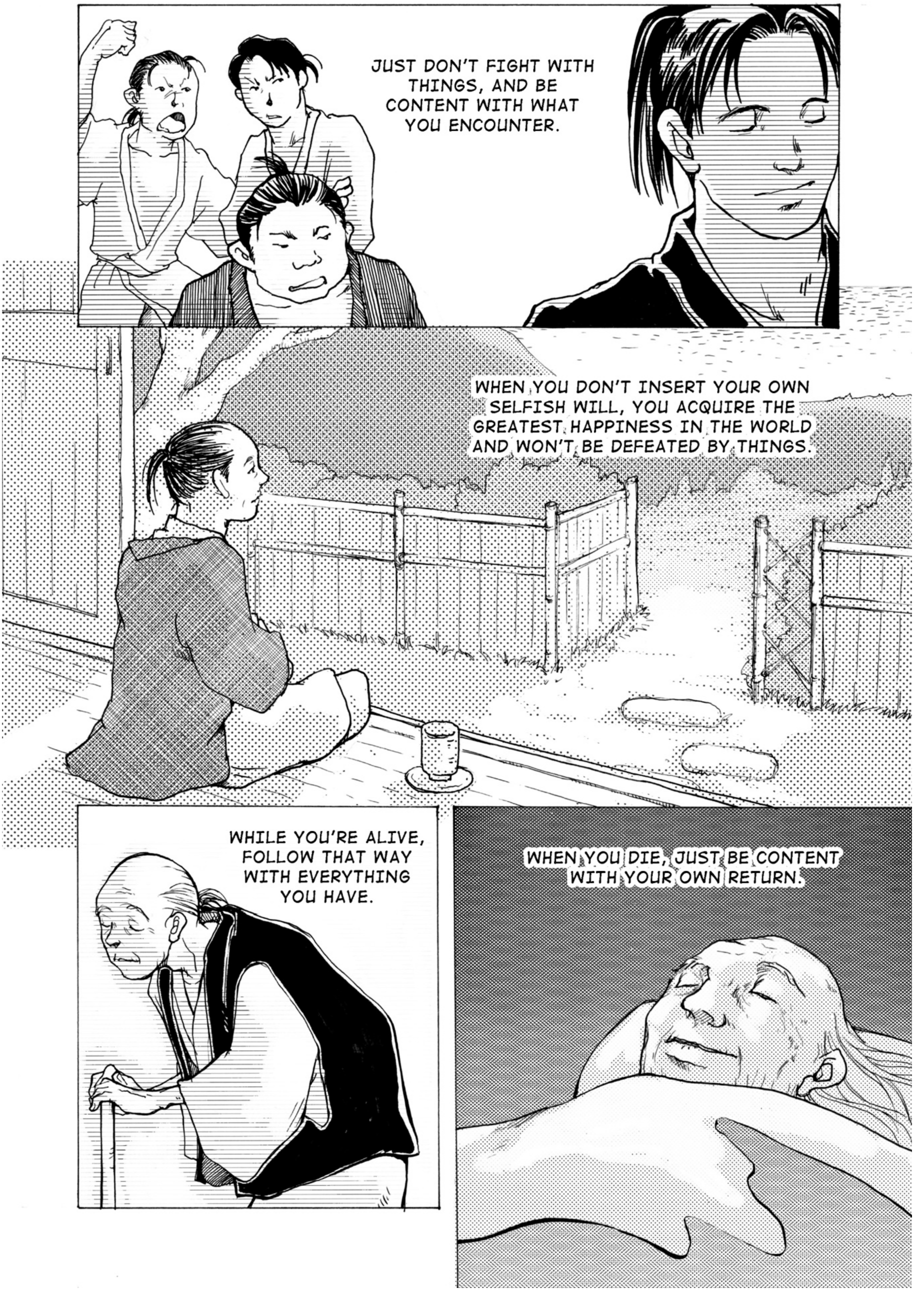

WHEN YOU REFLECT ON THE RICHES AND HONORS OF KINGS AND LORDS, EVEN THEY ARE NOT WORTH IT.
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T GOT ANYTHING INSIDE OF ME, I'VE ESCAPED FROM THE WORLD OF PLEASURE AND PAIN, OF GAIN AND LOSS.
KEEPING MY MOUTH SHUT, I COMPREHEND THE BUDDHA'S WORDS...

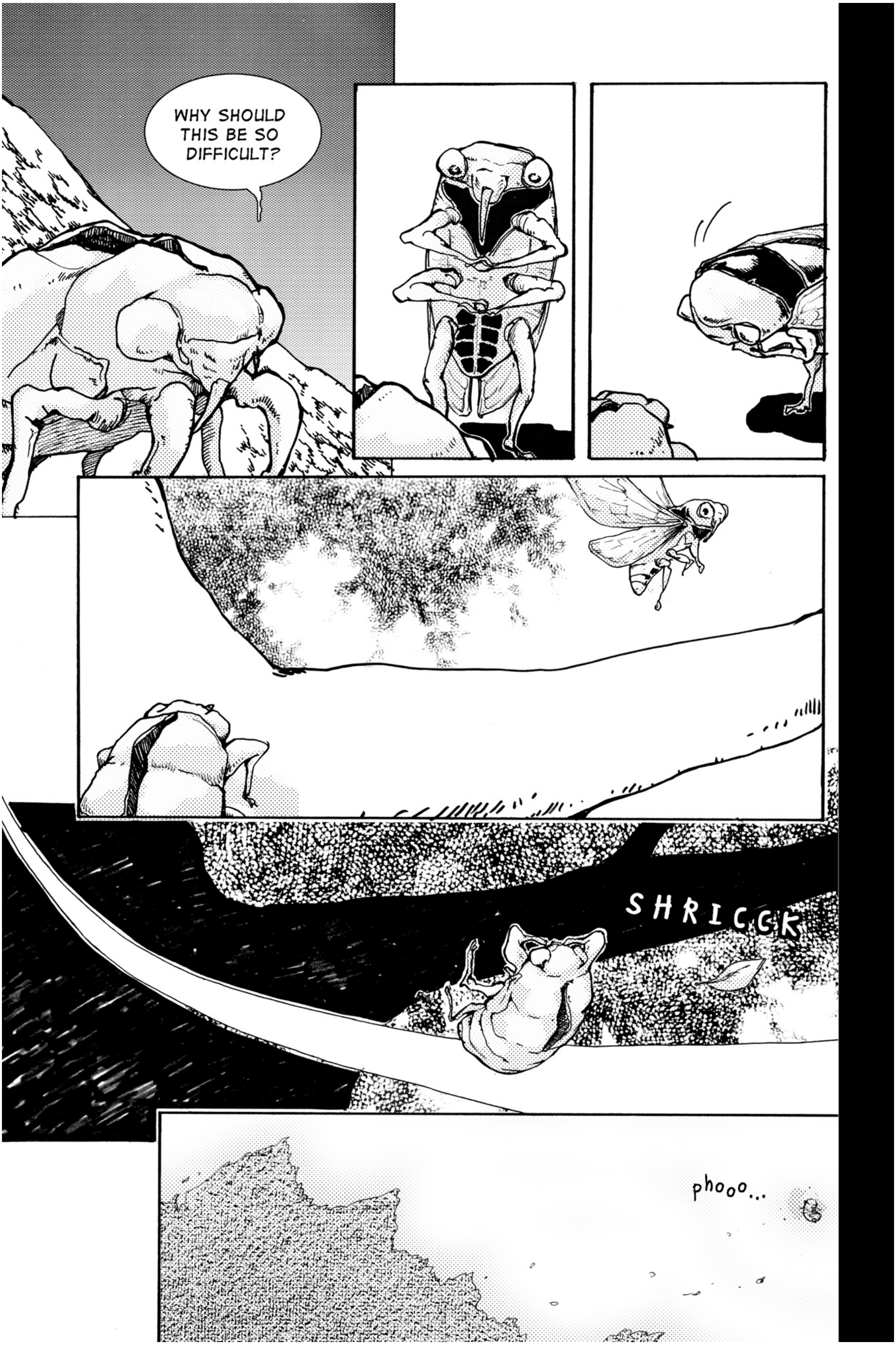


"BLISS OF ENTERING NIRVANA."

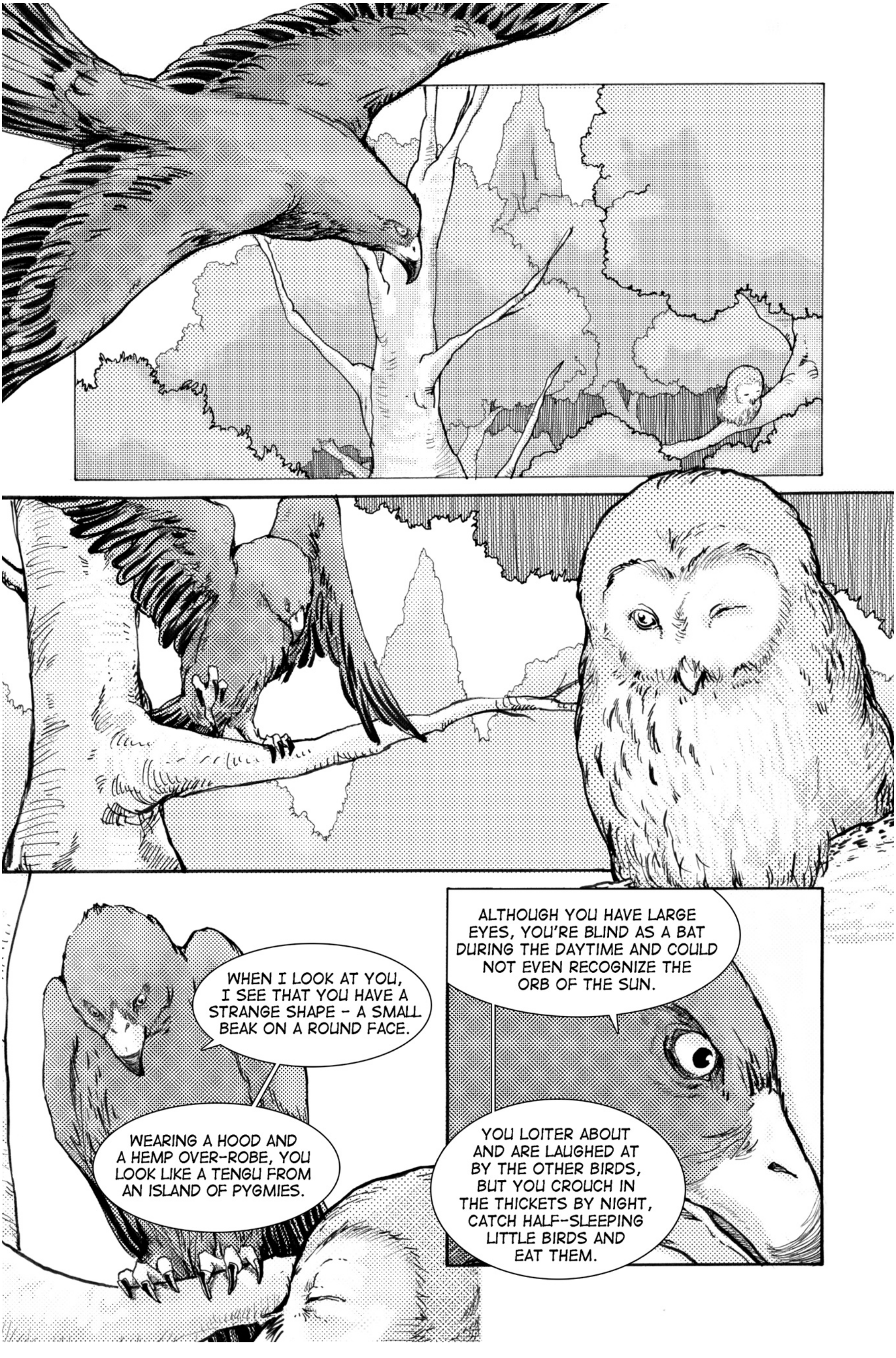

YOU ARE TRULY ONE WHO HAS BEEN DELIVERED.
EVEN THOUGH IT IS SAID THAT I DRINK THE DEW AND SEEK NOTHING IN THE WORLD, I STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO ESCAPE THE FACT THAT I'M A LIVING BEING.
IT IS MY DEEPEST DESIRE TO HEAR FROM YOU THE WAY OF DEALING WITH THIS WORLD.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.
NEVERTHELESS, HERE IS SOMETHING I HEARD IN SECRET...

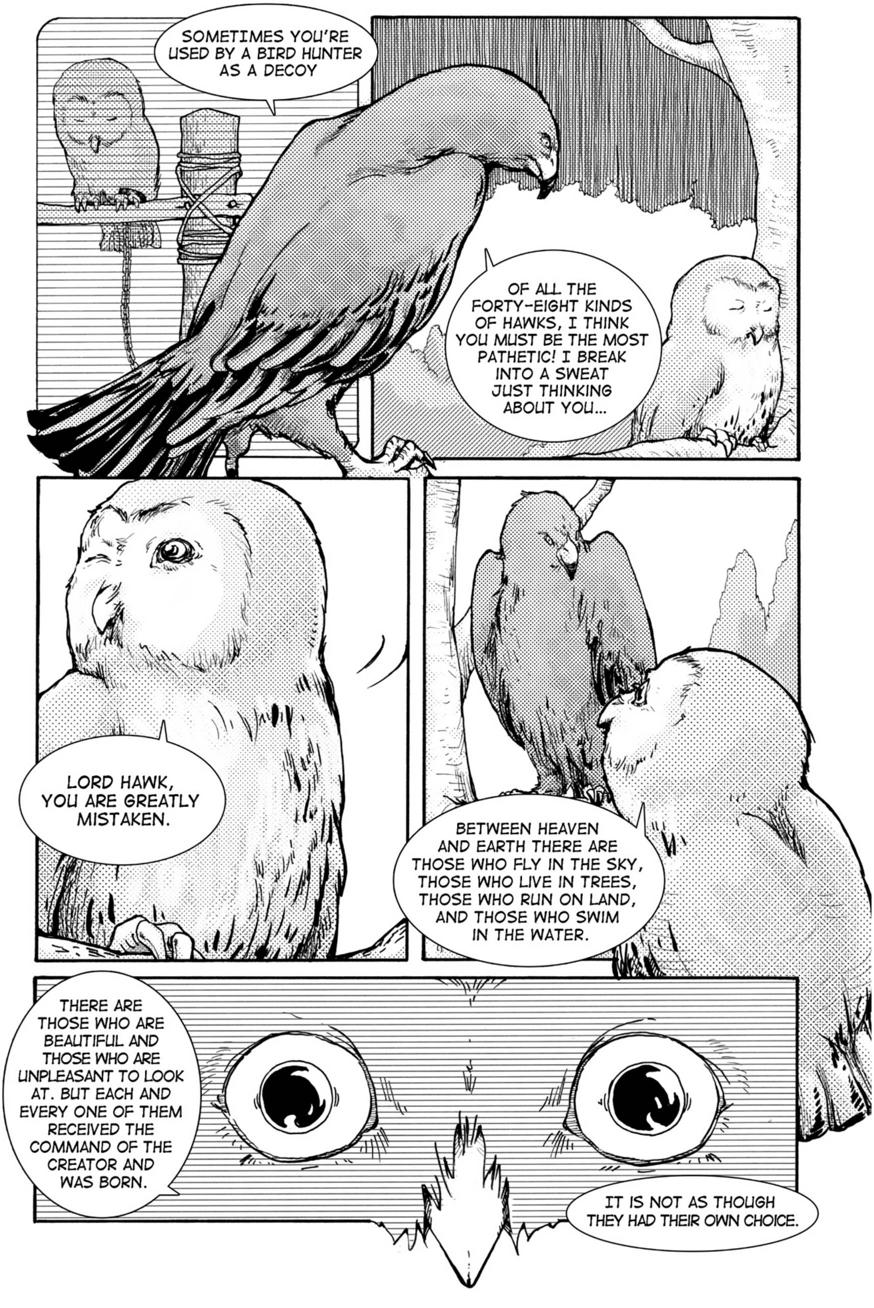

CREATION AND METAMORPHOSIS GIVE ME BIRTH, AND I PLAY IN THEIR MIDST. LIFE AND DEATH, GOOD FORTUNE AND CALAMITY, ARE MATTERS OF FATE.
IF YOU LOVE SOMETHING, YOU ENCUMBER YOUR MIND WITH ATTACHMENT.
IF YOU HATE SOMETHING, YOU MAKE YOUR MIND SUFFER.
TO MOPE ABOUT SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT CAPABLE OF DOING OR TO LAMENT SOME KNOWLEDGE YOU JUST CAN'T GET IS THE HEIGHT OF FOOLISHNESS.

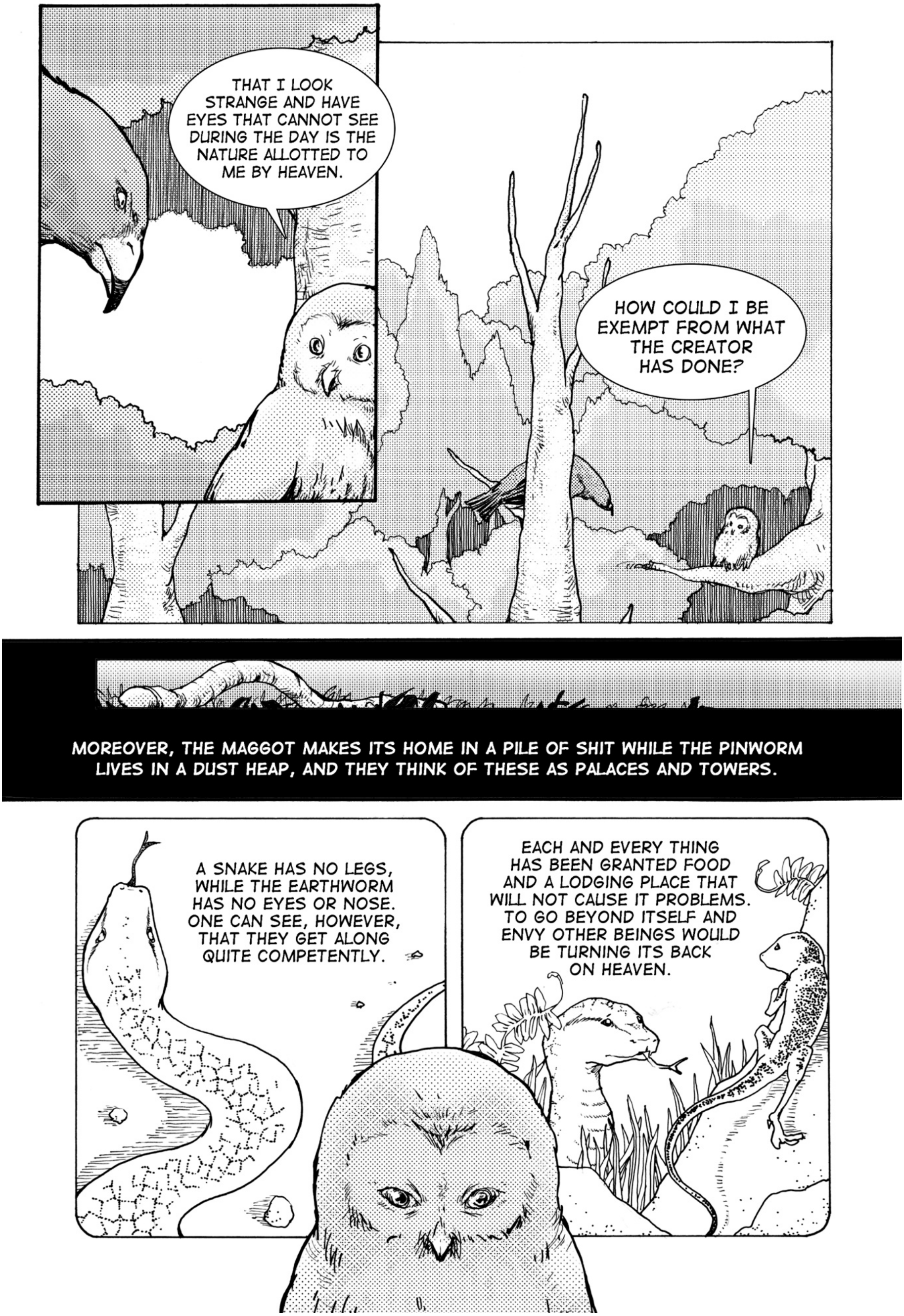

JUST DON'T FIGHT WITH THINGS, AND BE CONTENT WITH WHAT YOU ENCOUNTER.
WHEN YOU DON'T INSERT YOUR OWN SELFISH WILL, YOU ACQUIRE THE GREATEST HAPPINESS IN THE WORLD AND WON'T BE DEFEATED BY THINGS.
WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE, FOLLOW THAT WAY WITH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE.
WHEN YOU DIE, JUST BE CONTENT WITH YOUR OWN RETURN.

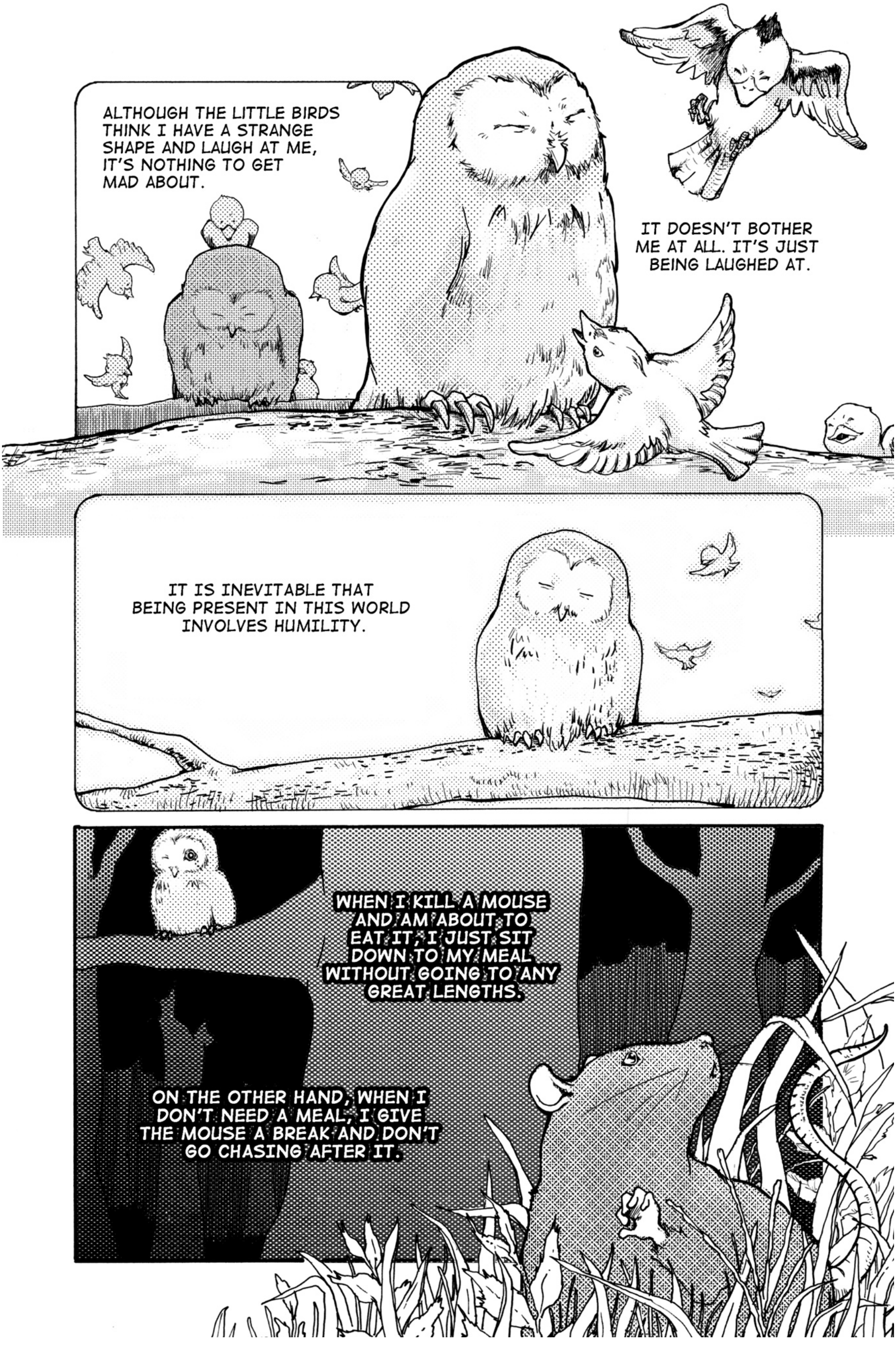

WHY SHOULD THIS BE SO DIFFICULT?
SHRICCK
phooo...

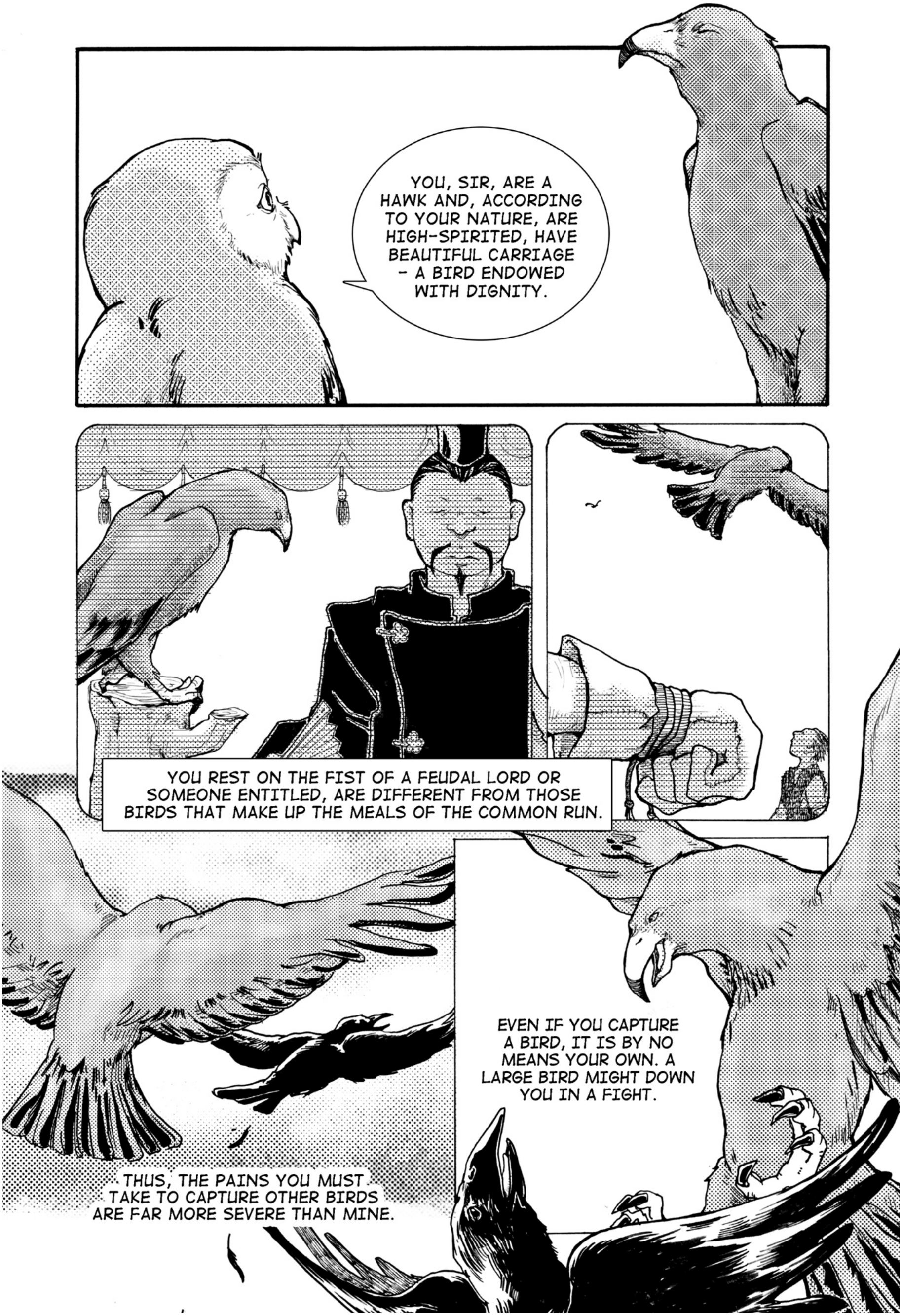
THE OWL'S UNDERSTANDING

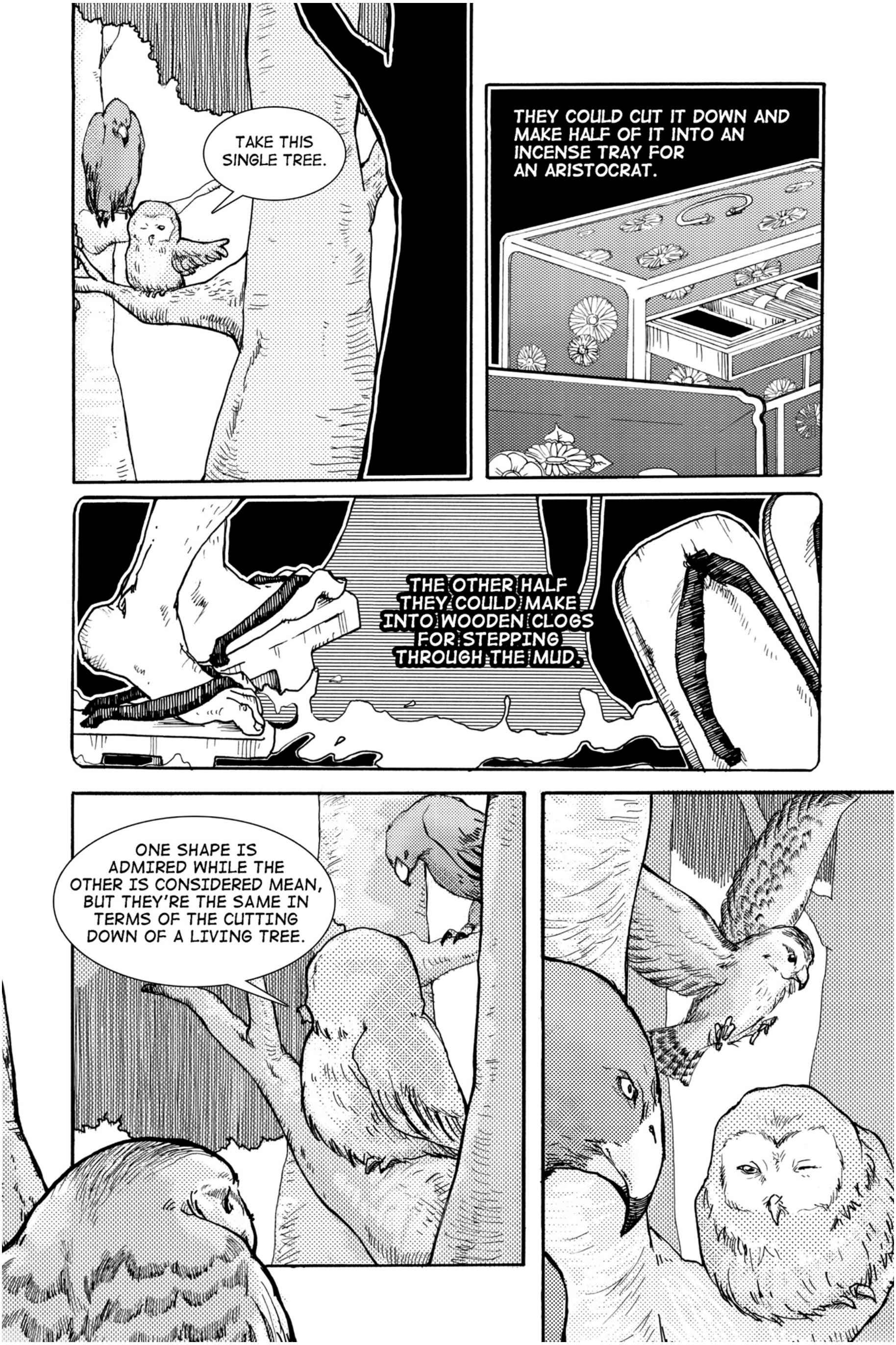

WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I SEE THAT YOU HAVE A STRANGE SHAPE - A SMALL BEAK ON A ROUND FACE.
WEARING A HOOD AND A HEMP OVER-ROBE, YOU LOOK LIKE A TENGU FROM AN ISLAND OF PYGMIES.
ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE LARGE EYES, YOU'RE BLIND AS A BAT DURING THE DAYTIME AND COULD NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE THE ORB OF THE SUN.
YOU LOITER ABOUT AND ARE LAUGHED AT BY THE OTHER BIRDS, BUT YOU CROUCH IN THE THICKETS BY NIGHT, CATCH HALF-SLEEPING LITTLE BIRDS AND EAT THEM.

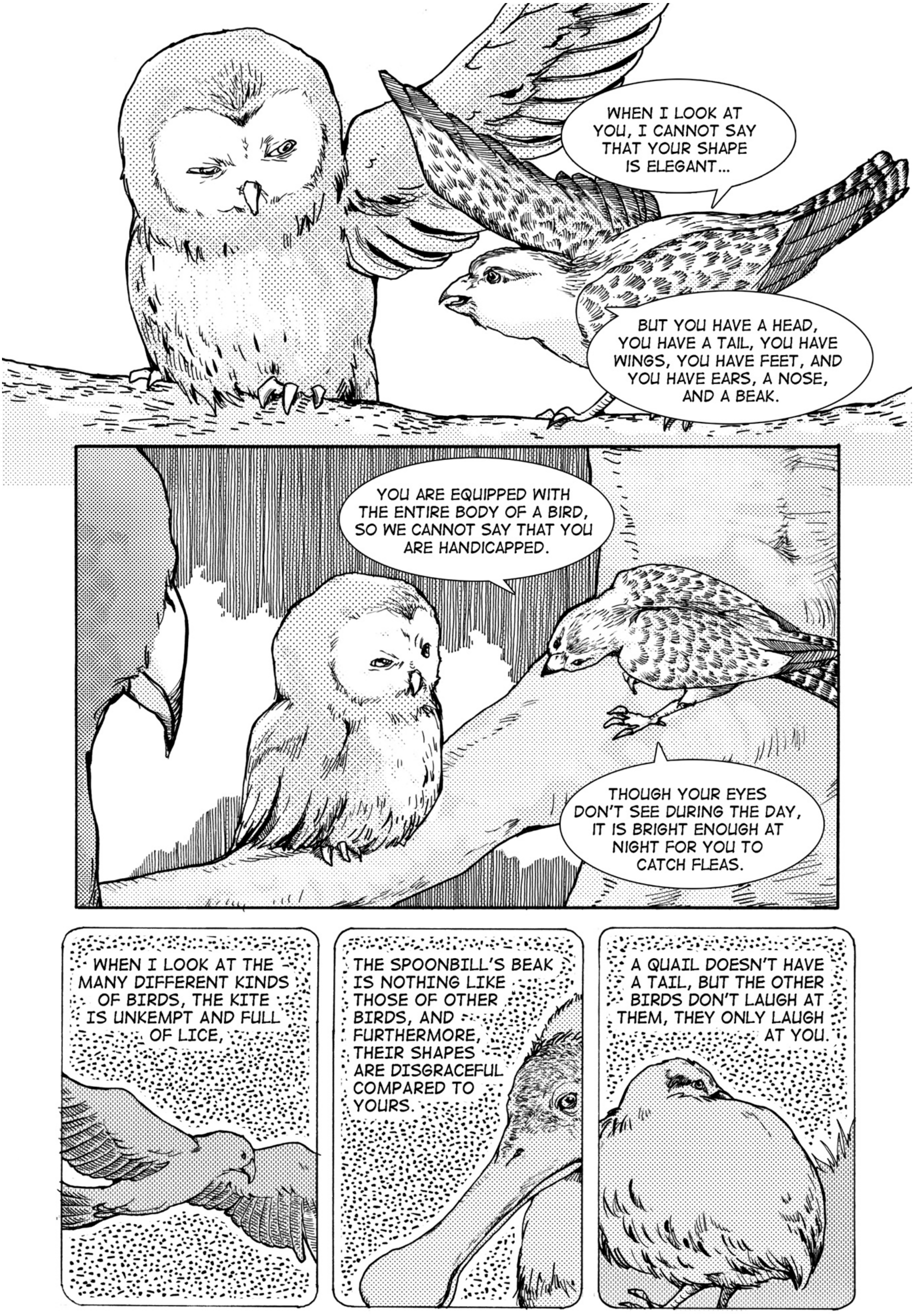

SOMETIMES YOU'RE USED BY A BIRD HUNTER AS A DECOY
OF ALL THE FORTY-EIGHT KINDS OF HAWKS, I THINK YOU MUST BE THE MOST PATHETIC! I BREAK INTO A SWEAT JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU...
LORD HAWK, YOU ARE GREATLY MISTAKEN.
BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH THERE ARE THOSE WHO FLY IN THE SKY, THOSE WHO LIVE IN TREES, THOSE WHO RUN ON LAND, AND THOSE WHO SWIM IN THE WATER.
THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE BEAUTIFUL AND THOSE WHO ARE UNPLEASANT TO LOOK AT. BUT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM RECEIVED THE COMMAND OF THE CREATOR AND WAS BORN.
IT IS NOT AS THOUGH THEY HAD THEIR OWN CHOICE.

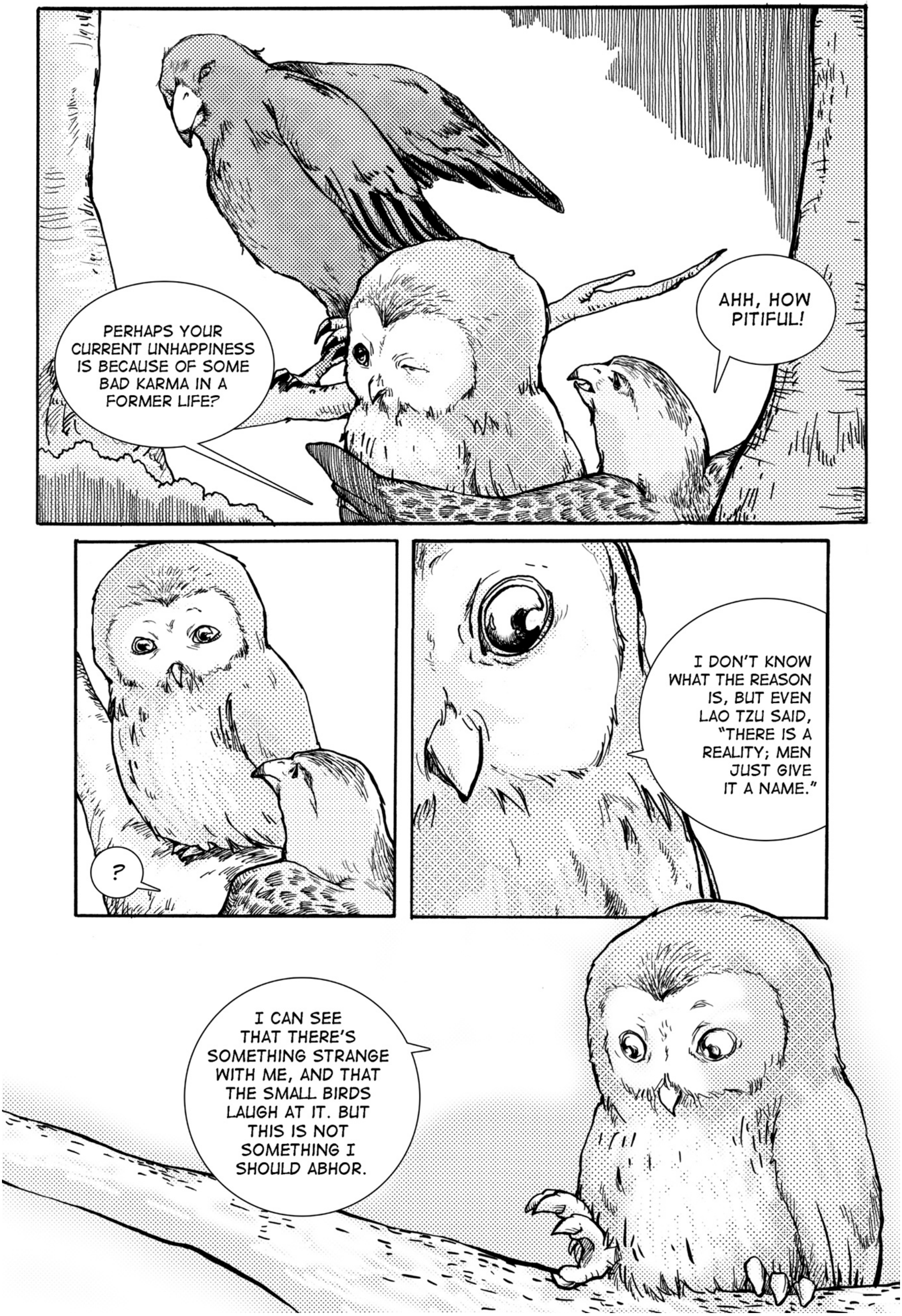

THAT I LOOK STRANGE AND HAVE EYES THAT CANNOT SEE DURING THE DAY IS THE NATURE ALLOTTED TO ME BY HEAVEN.
HOW COULD I BE EXEMPT FROM WHAT THE CREATOR HAS DONE?
MOREOVER, THE MAGGOT MAKES ITS HOME IN A PILE OF SHIT WHILE THE PINWORM LIVES IN A DUST HEAP, AND THEY THINK OF THESE AS PALACES AND TOWERS.
A SNAKE HAS NO LEGS, WHILE THE EARTHWORM HAS NO EYES OR NOSE. ONE CAN SEE, HOWEVER, THAT THEY GET ALONG QUITE COMPETENTLY.
EACH AND EVERY THING HAS BEEN GRANTED FOOD AND A LODGING PLACE THAT WILL NOT CAUSE IT PROBLEMS. TO GO BEYOND ITSELF AND ENVY OTHER BEINGS WOULD BE TURNING ITS BACK ON HEAVEN.

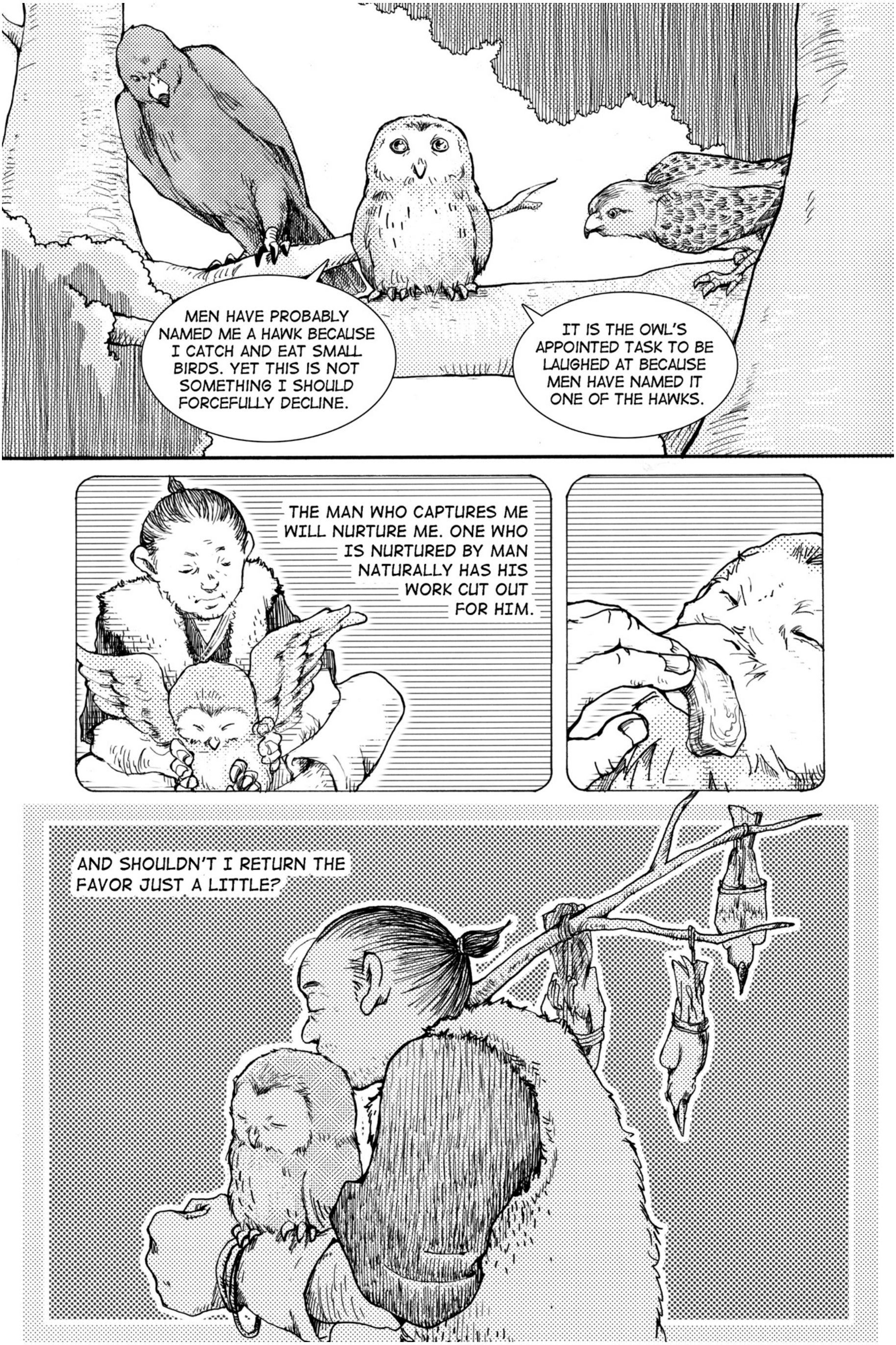

ALTHOUGH THE LITTLE BIRDS THINK I HAVE A STRANGE SHAPE AND LAUGH AT ME, IT'S NOTHING TO GET MAD ABOUT.
IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL. IT'S JUST BEING LAUGHED AT.
IT IS INEVITABLE THAT BEING PRESENT IN THIS WORLD INVOLVES HUMILITY.
WHEN I KILL A MOUSE AND AM ABOUT TO EAT IT, I JUST SIT DOWN TO MY MEAL WITHOUT GOING TO ANY GREAT LENGTHS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, WHEN I DON'T NEED A MEAL, I GIVE THE MOUSE A BREAK AND DON'T GO CHASING AFTER IT.


YOU, SIR, ARE A HAWK AND, ACCORDING TO YOUR NATURE, ARE HIGH-SPIRITED, HAVE BEAUTIFUL CARRIAGE - A BIRD ENDOWED WITH DIGNITY.
YOU REST ON THE FIST OF A FEUDAL LORD OR SOMEONE ENTITLED, ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE BIRDS THAT MAKE UP THE MEALS OF THE COMMON RUN.
EVEN IF YOU CAPTURE A BIRD, IT IS BY NO MEANS YOUR OWN. A LARGE BIRD MIGHT DOWN YOU IN A FIGHT.
THUS, THE PAINS YOU MUST TAKE TO CAPTURE OTHER BIRDS ARE FAR MORE SEVERE THAN MINE.


TAKE THIS SINGLE TREE.
THEY COULD CUT IT DOWN AND MAKE HALF OF IT INTO AN INCENSE TRAY FOR AN ARISTOCRAT.
THE OTHER HALF THEY COULD MAKE INTO WOODEN CLOGS FOR STEPPING THROUGH THE MUD.
ONE SHAPE IS ADMIRED WHILE THE OTHER IS CONSIDERED MEAN, BUT THEY'RE THE SAME IN TERMS OF THE CUTTING DOWN OF A LIVING TREE.

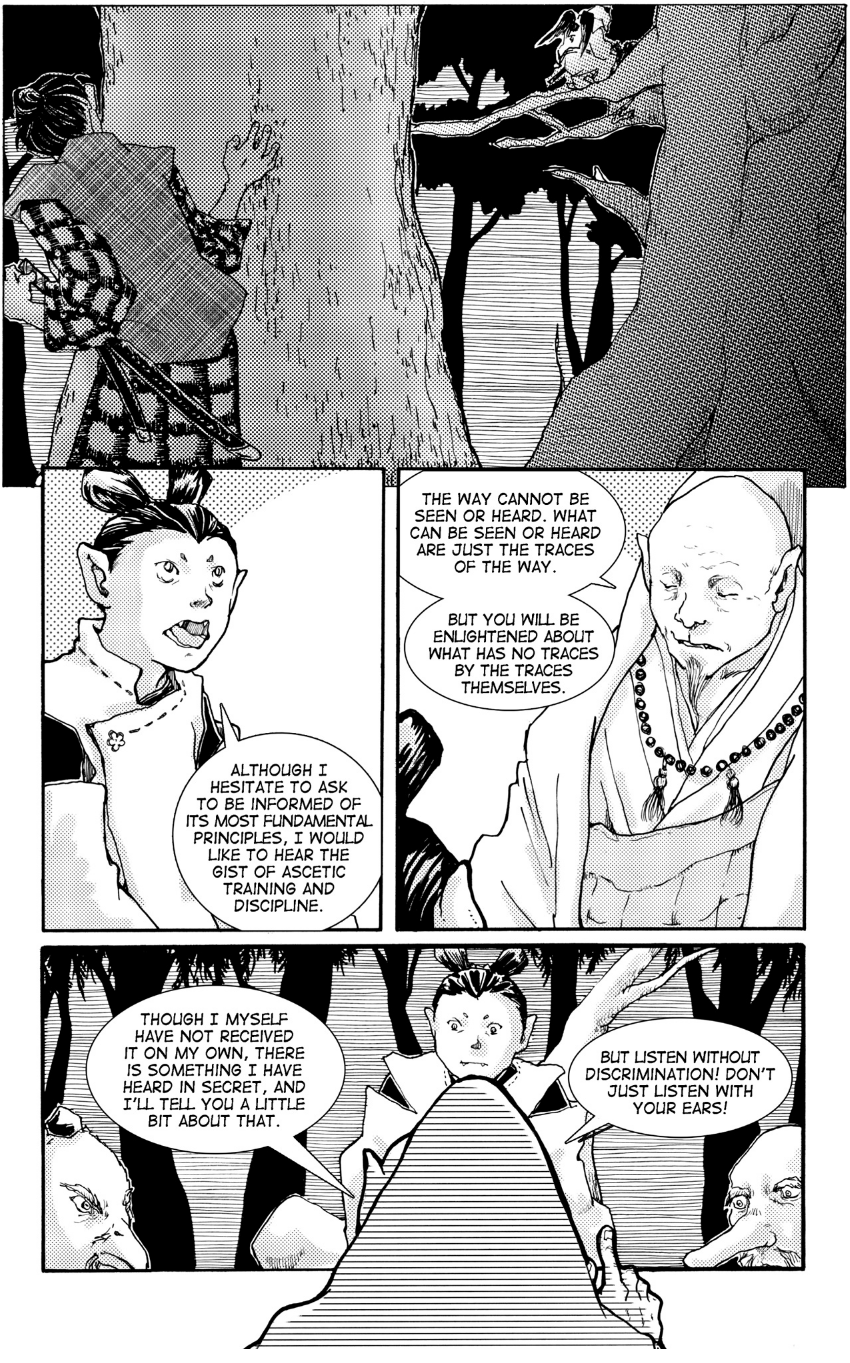

WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I CANNOT SAY THAT YOUR SHAPE IS ELEGANT...
BUT YOU HAVE A HEAD, YOU HAVE A TAIL, YOU HAVE WINGS, YOU HAVE FEET, AND YOU HAVE EARS, A NOSE, AND A BEAK.
YOU ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE ENTIRE BODY OF A BIRD, SO WE CANNOT SAY THAT YOU ARE HANDICAPPED.
THOUGH YOUR EYES DON'T SEE DURING THE DAY, IT IS BRIGHT ENOUGH AT NIGHT FOR YOU TO CATCH FLEAS.
WHEN I LOOK AT THE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF BIRDS, THE KITE IS UNKEMPT AND FULL OF LICE,
THE SPOONBILL'S BEAK IS NOTHING LIKE THOSE OF OTHER BIRDS, AND FURTHERMORE, THEIR SHAPES ARE DISGRACEFUL COMPARED TO YOURS.
A QUAIL DOESN'T HAVE A TAIL, BUT THE OTHER BIRDS DON'T LAUGH AT THEM, THEY ONLY LAUGH AT YOU.

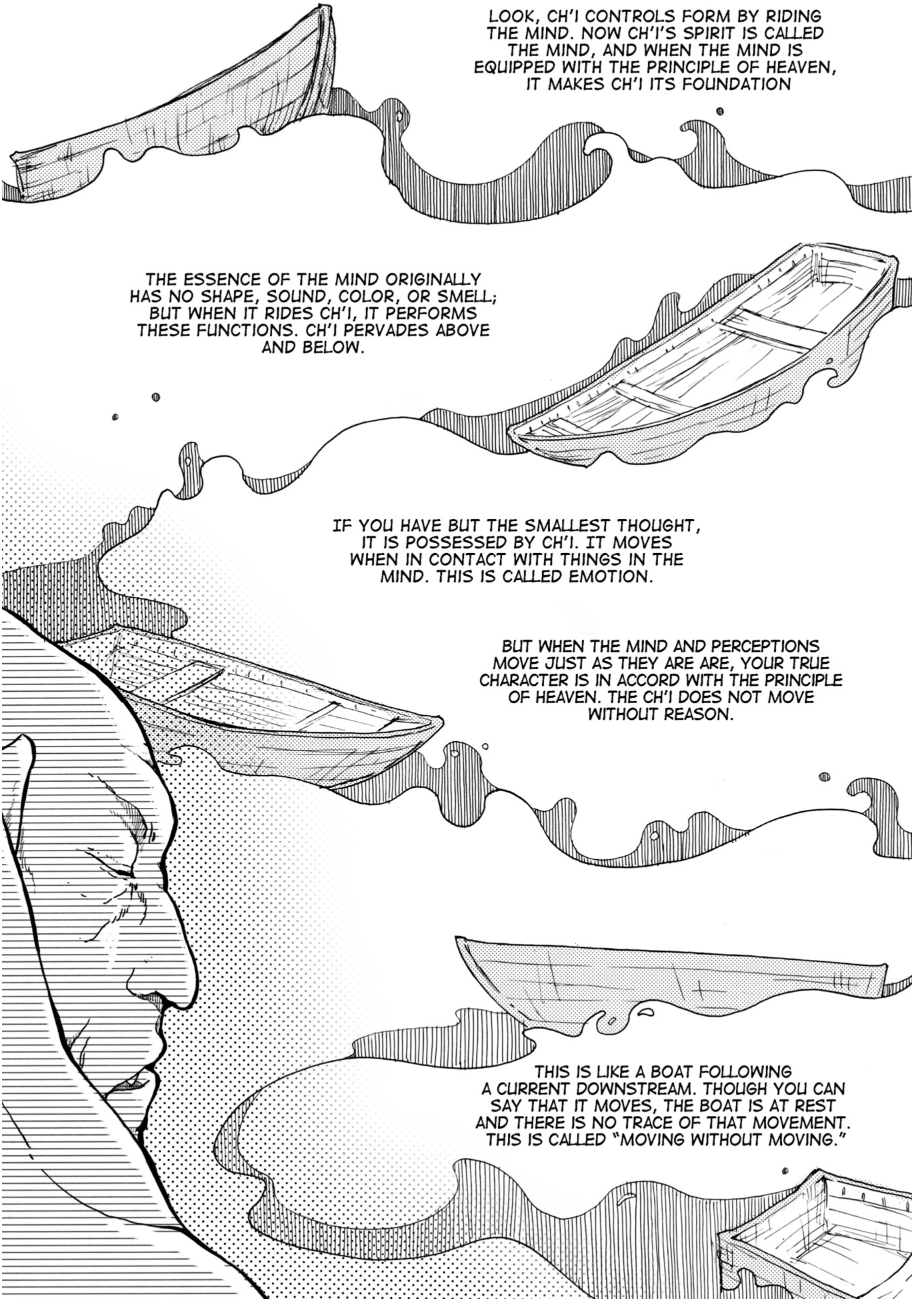

PERHAPS YOUR CURRENT UNHAPPINESS IS BECAUSE OF SOME BAD KARMA IN A FORMER LIFE?
AHH, HOW PITIFUL!
?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE REASON IS, BUT EVEN LAO TZU SAID, "THERE IS A REALITY; MEN JUST GIVE IT A NAME."
I CAN SEE THAT THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE WITH ME, AND THAT THE SMALL BIRDS LAUGH AT IT. BUT THIS IS NOT SOMETHING I SHOULD ABHOR.

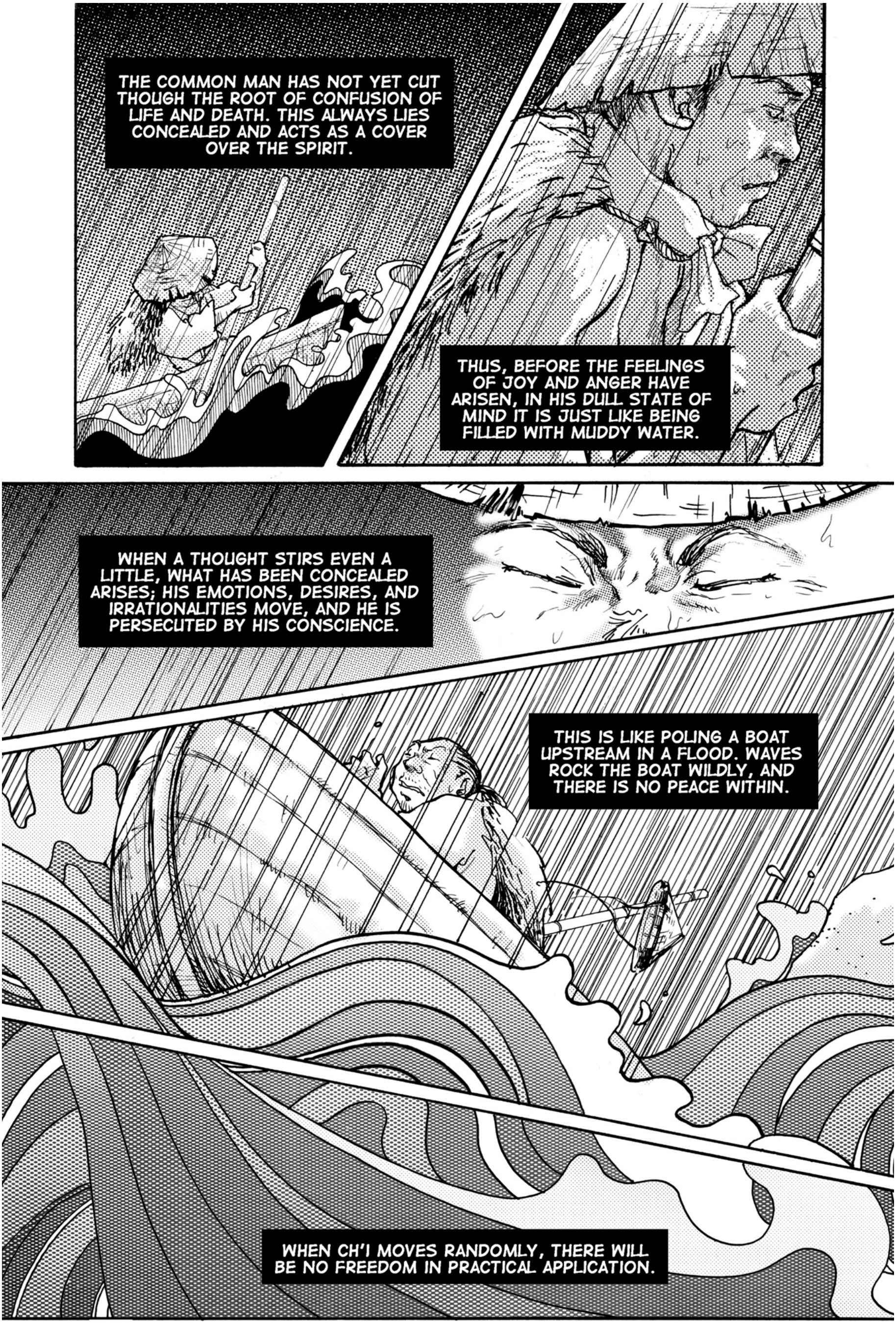

MEN HAVE PROBABLY NAMED ME A HAWK BECAUSE I CATCH AND EAT SMALL BIRDS. YET THIS IS NOT SOMETHING I SHOULD FORCEFULLY DECLINE.
IT IS THE OWL'S APPOINTED TASK TO BE LAUGHED AT BECAUSE MEN HAVE NAMED IT ONE OF THE HAWKS.
THE MAN WHO CAPTURES ME WILL NURTURE ME. ONE WHO IS NURTURED BY MAN NATURALLY HAS HIS WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM.
AND SHOULDN'T I RETURN THE FAVOR JUST A LITTLE?

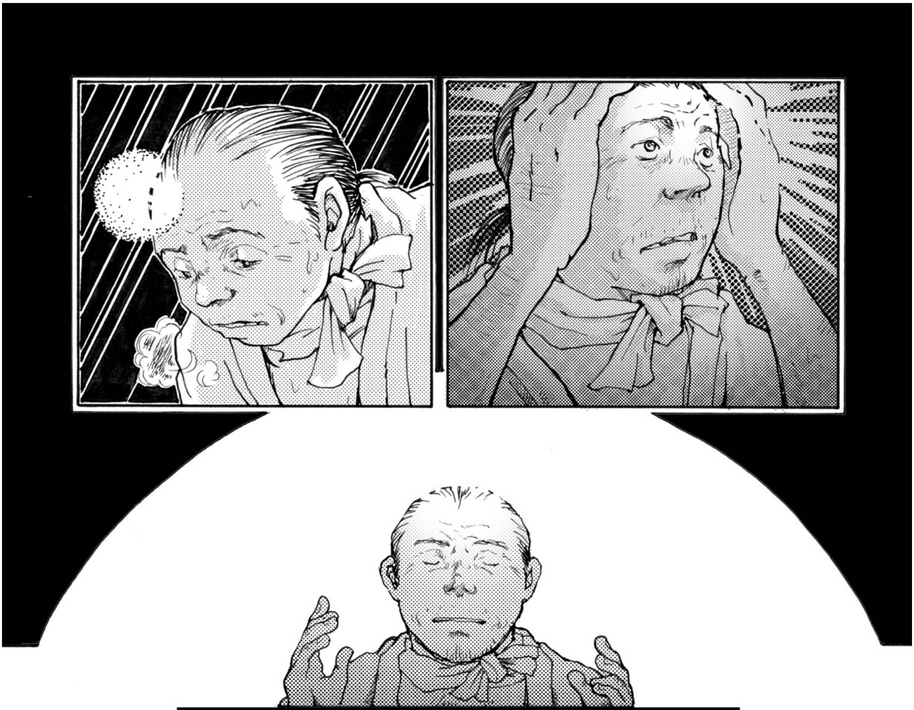
THE DEMON'S SERMON

PART 3


ALTHOUGH I HESITATE TO ASK TO BE INFORMED OF ITS MOST FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES, I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THE GIST OF ASCETIC TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE.
THE WAY CANNOT BE SEEN OR HEARD. WHAT CAN BE SEEN OR HEARD ARE JUST THE TRACES OF THE WAY.
BUT YOU WILL BE ENLIGHTENED ABOUT WHAT HAS NO TRACES BY THE TRACES THEMSELVES.
THOUGH I MYSELF HAVE NOT RECEIVED IT ON MY OWN, THERE IS SOMETHING I HAVE HEARD IN SECRET, AND I'LL TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT.
BUT LISTEN WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION! DON'T JUST LISTEN WITH YOUR EARS!

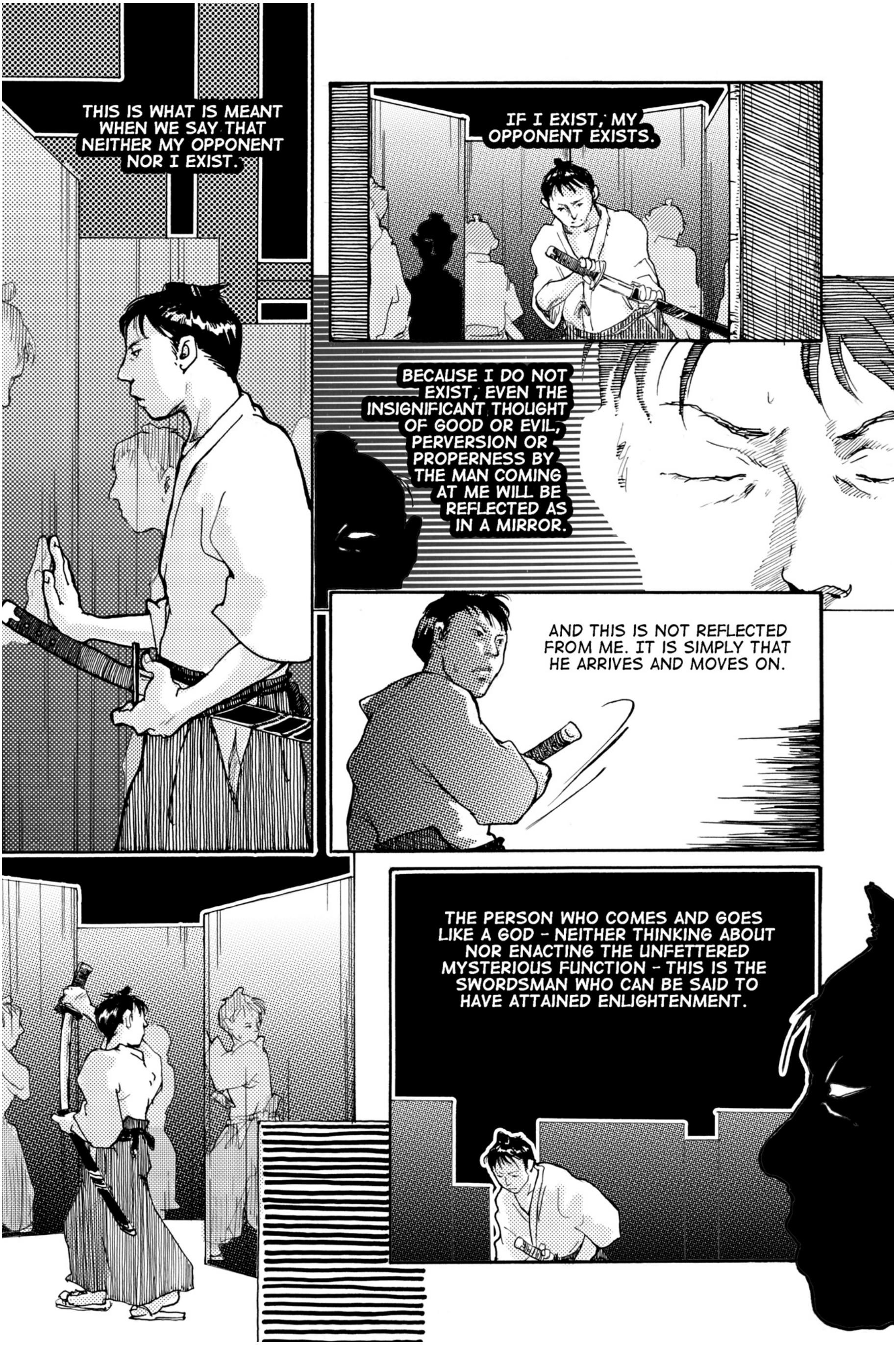

LOOK, CH'I CONTROLS FORM BY RIDING THE MIND. NOW CH'I'S SPIRIT IS CALLED THE MIND, AND WHEN THE MIND IS EQUIPPED WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF HEAVEN, IT MAKES CH'I ITS FOUNDATION
THE ESSENCE OF THE MIND ORIGINALLY HAS NO SHAPE, SOUND, COLOR, OR SMELL; BUT WHEN IT RIDES CH'I, IT PERFORMS THESE FUNCTIONS. CH'I PERVADES ABOVE AND BELOW.
IF YOU HAVE BUT THE SMALLEST THOUGHT, IT IS POSSESSED BY CH'I. IT MOVES WHEN IN CONTACT WITH THINGS IN THE MIND. THIS IS CALLED EMOTION.
BUT WHEN THE MIND AND PERCEPTIONS MOVE JUST AS THEY ARE ARE, YOUR TRUE CHARACTER IS IN ACCORD WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF HEAVEN. THE CH'I DOES NOT MOVE WITHOUT REASON.
THIS IS LIKE A BOAT FOLLOWING A CURRENT DOWNSTREAM. THOUGH YOU CAN SAY THAT IT MOVES, THE BOAT IS AT REST AND THERE IS NO TRACE OF THAT MOVEMENT. THIS IS CALLED "MOVING WITHOUT MOVING."

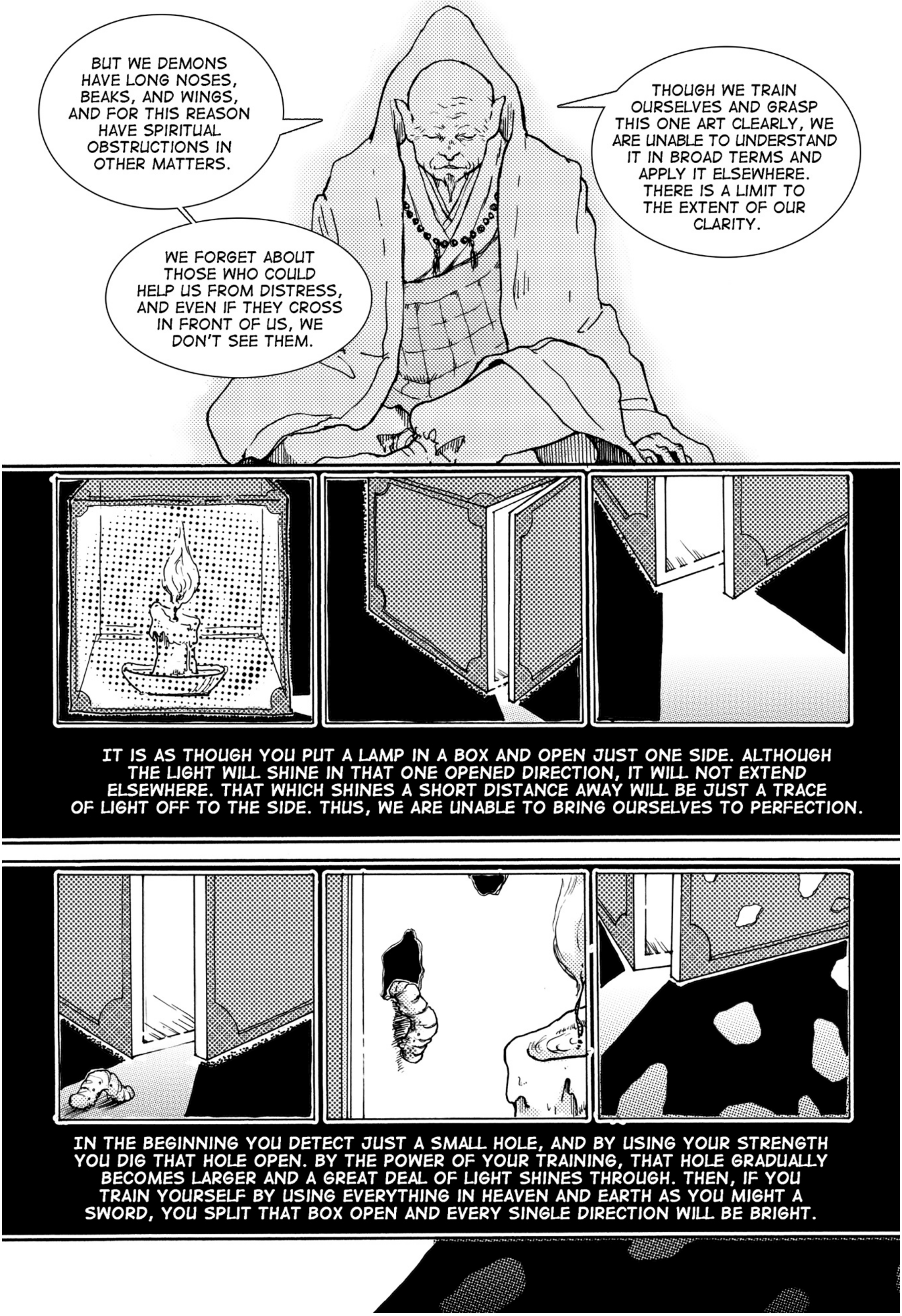

THE COMMON MAN HAS NOT YET CUT THOUGH THE ROOT OF CONFUSION OF LIFE AND DEATH. THIS ALWAYS LIES CONCEALED AND ACTS AS A COVER OVER THE SPIRIT.
THUS, BEFORE THE FEELINGS OF JOY AND ANGER HAVE ARISEN, IN HIS DULL STATE OF MIND IT IS JUST LIKE BEING FILLED WITH MUDDY WATER.
WHEN A THOUGHT STIRS EVEN A LITTLE, WHAT HAS BEEN CONCEALED ARISES; HIS EMOTIONS, DESIRES, AND IRRATIONALITIES MOVE, AND HE IS PERSECUTED BY HIS CONSCIENCE.
THIS IS LIKE POLING A BOAT UPSTREAM IN A FLOOD. WAVES ROCK THE BOAT WILDLY, AND THERE IS NO PEACE WITHIN.
WHEN CH'I MOVES RANDOMLY, THERE WILL BE NO FREEDOM IN PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

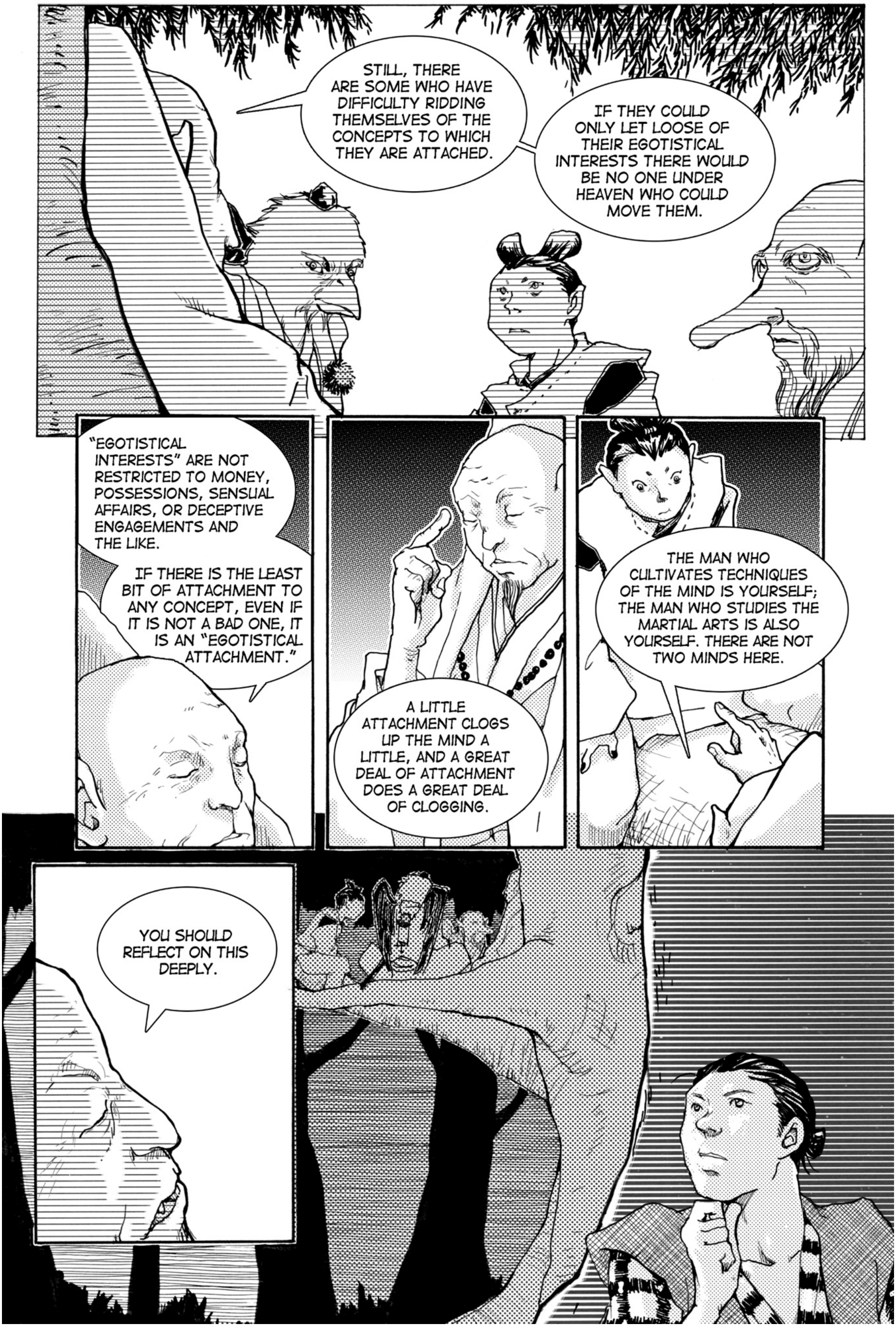


FOLLOWING THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE MIND, THE SPEED OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION IS LIKE OPENING A DOOR AND THE MOONLIGHT IMMEDIATELY SHINING IN.

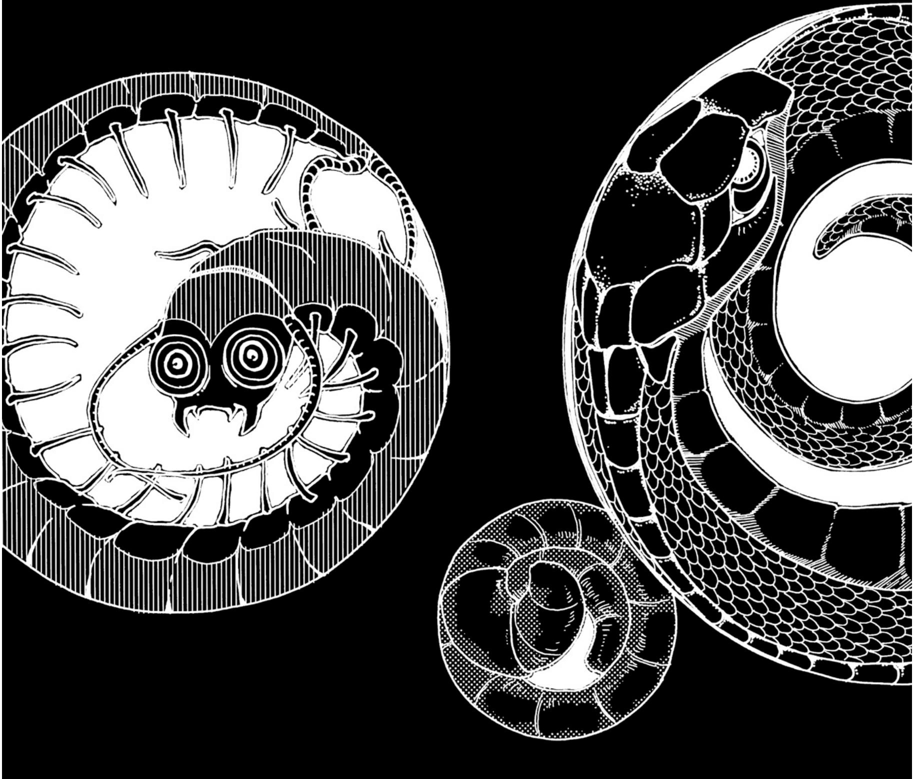
IF YOU DON'T HAVE CONCEPTUALIZATION, FORM WILL NOT HAVE ASPECT. ASPECT IS THE SHADOW OF CONCEPT, AND IS WHAT MANIFESTS FORM. IF THERE IS NO ASPECT TO FORM, THE OPPONENT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO FACE WILL NOT EXIST.

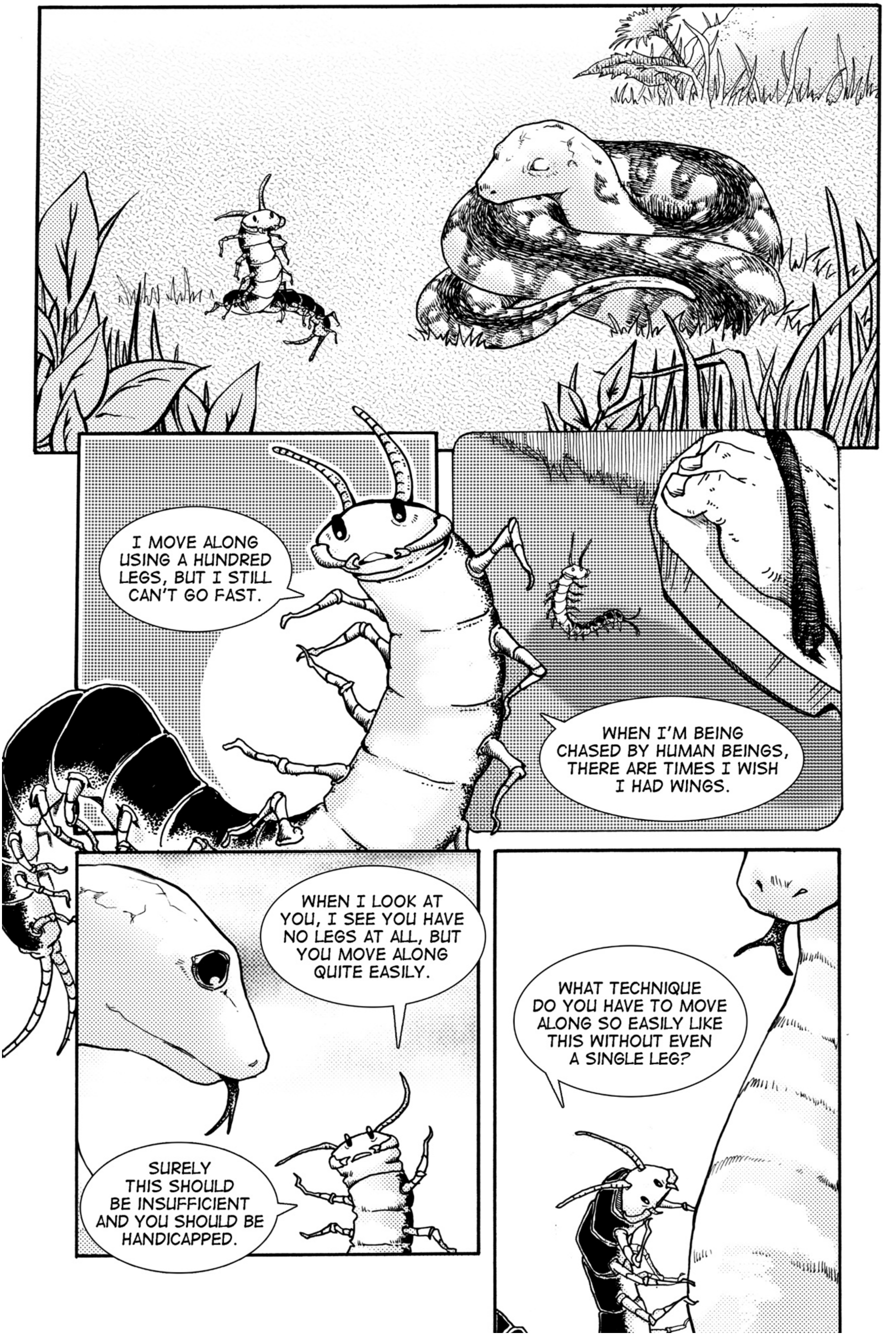

THIS IS WHAT IS MEANT WHEN WE SAY THAT NEITHER MY OPPONENT NOR I EXIST.
IF I EXIST, MY OPPONENT EXISTS.
BECAUSE I DO NOT EXIST, EVEN THE INSIGNIFICANT THOUGHT OF GOOD OR EVIL, PERVERSION OR PROPERNESS BY THE MAN COMING AT ME WILL BE REFLECTED AS IN A MIRROR.
AND THIS IS NOT REFLECTED FROM ME. IT IS SIMPLY THAT HE ARRIVES AND MOVES ON.
THE PERSON WHO COMES AND GOES LIKE A GOD - NEITHER THINKING ABOUT NOR ENACTING THE UNFETTERED MYSTERIOUS FUNCTION - THIS IS THE SWORDSMAN WHO CAN BE SAID TO HAVE ATTAINED ENLIGHTENMENT.

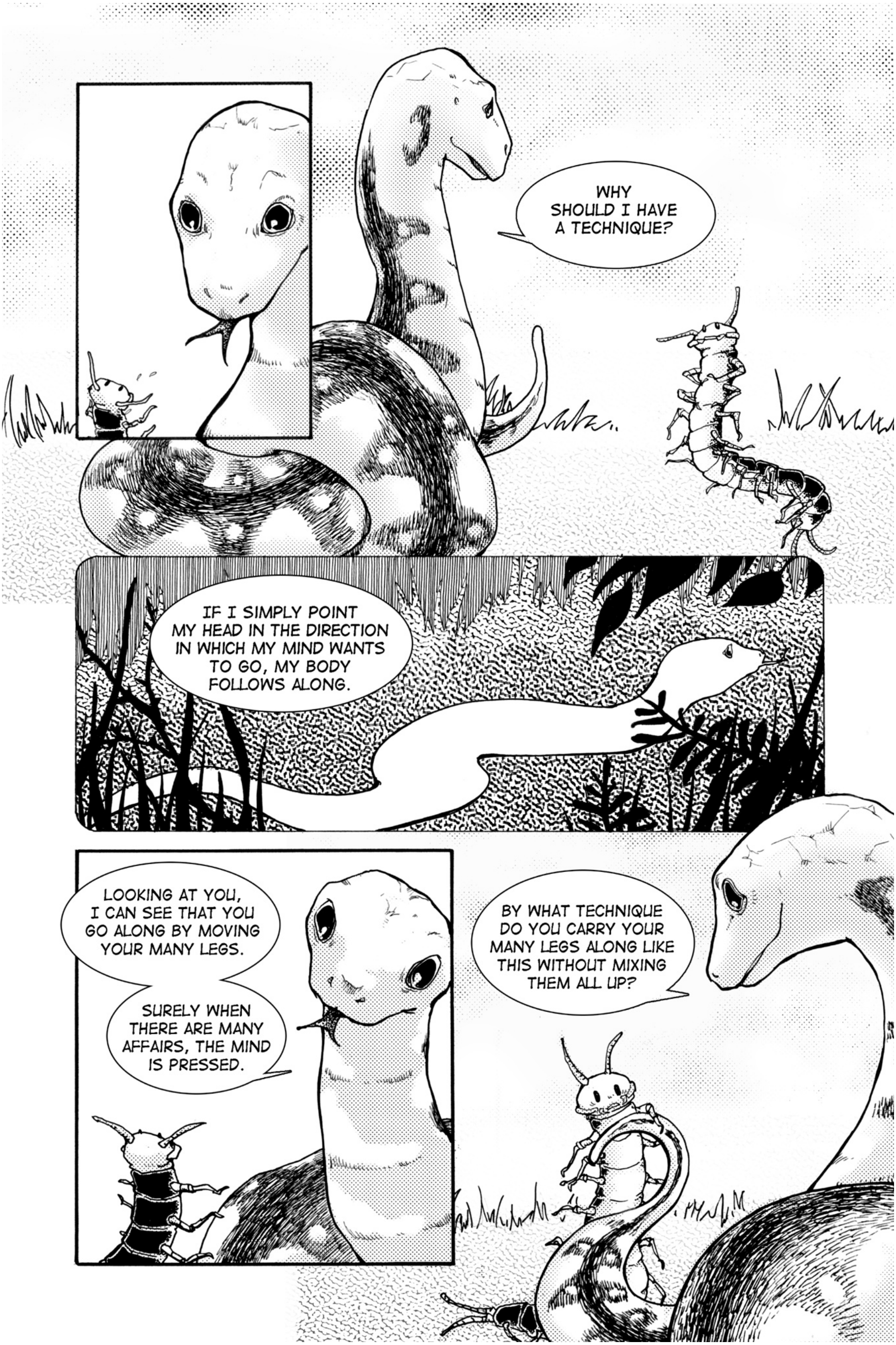

BUT WE DEMONS HAVE LONG NOSES, BEAKS, AND WINGS, AND FOR THIS REASON HAVE SPIRITUAL OBSTRUCTIONS IN OTHER MATTERS.
WE FORGET ABOUT THOSE WHO COULD HELP US FROM DISTRESS, AND EVEN IF THEY CROSS IN FRONT OF US, WE DON'T SEE THEM.
THOUGH WE TRAIN OURSELVES AND GRASP THIS ONE ART CLEARLY, WE ARE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND IT IN BROAD TERMS AND APPLY IT ELSEWHERE. THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE EXTENT OF OUR CLARITY.
IT IS AS THOUGH YOU PUT A LAMP IN A BOX AND OPEN JUST ONE SIDE. ALTHOUGH THE LIGHT WILL SHINE IN THAT ONE OPENED DIRECTION, IT WILL NOT EXTEND ELSEWHERE. THAT WHICH SHINES A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY WILL BE JUST A TRACE OF LIGHT OFF TO THE SIDE. THUS, WE ARE UNABLE TO BRING OURSELVES TO PERFECTION.
IN THE BEGINNING YOU DETECT JUST A SMALL HOLE, AND BY USING YOUR STRENGTH YOU DIG THAT HOLE OPEN. BY THE POWER OF YOUR TRAINING, THAT HOLE GRADUALLY BECOMES LARGER AND A GREAT DEAL OF LIGHT SHINES THROUGH. THEN, IF YOU TRAIN YOURSELF BY USING EVERYTHING IN HEAVEN AND EARTH AS YOU MIGHT A SWORD, YOU SPLIT THAT BOX OPEN AND EVERY SINGLE DIRECTION WILL BE BRIGHT.

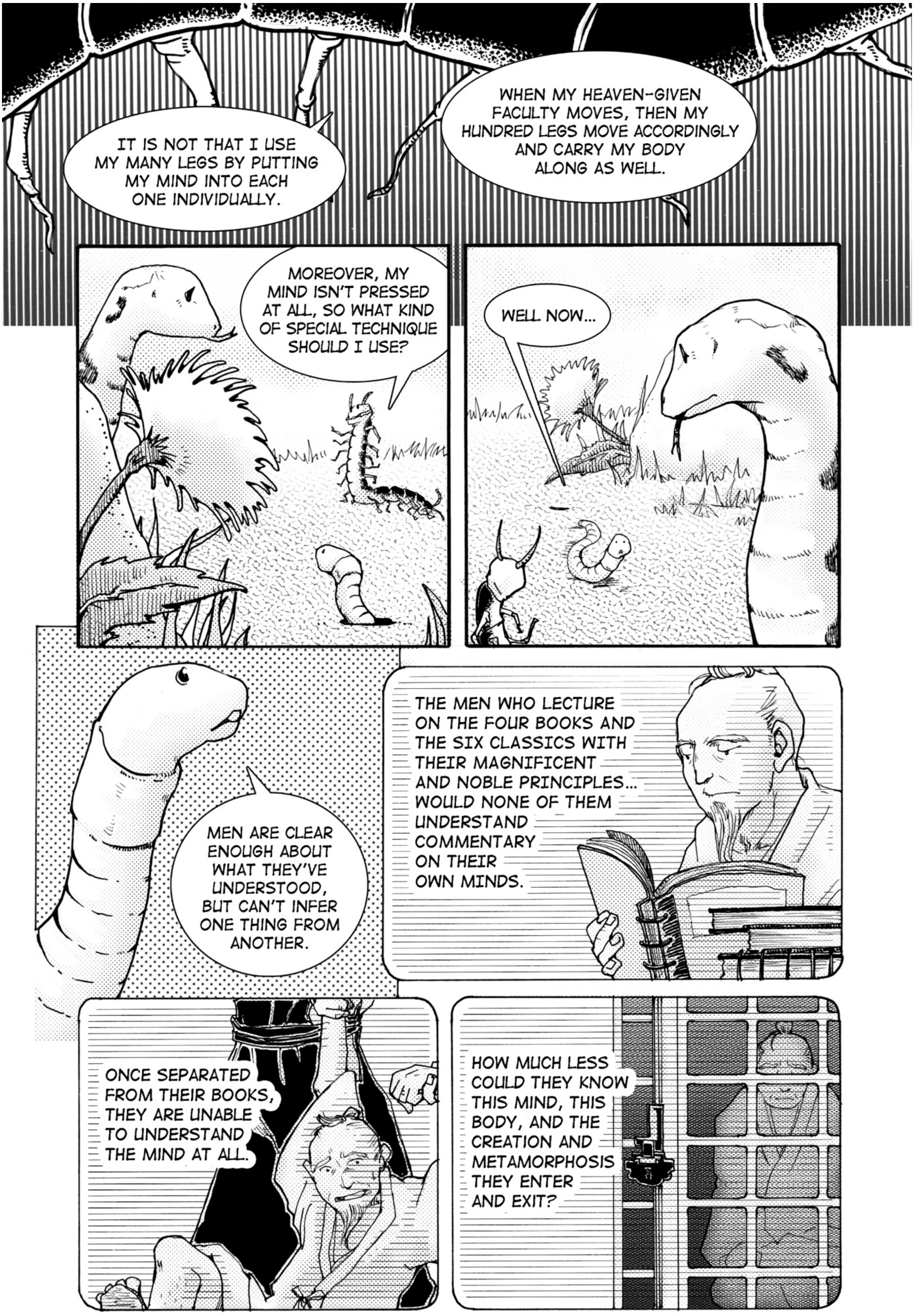

STILL, THERE ARE SOME WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY RIDDING THEMSELVES OF THE CONCEPTS TO WHICH THEY ARE ATTACHED.
IF THEY COULD ONLY LET LOOSE OF THEIR EGOTISTICAL INTERESTS THERE WOULD BE NO ONE UNDER HEAVEN WHO COULD MOVE THEM.
"EGOTISTICAL INTERESTS" ARE NOT RESTRICTED TO MONEY, POSSESSIONS, SENSUAL AFFAIRS, OR DECEPTIVE ENGAGEMENTS AND THE LIKE.
IF THERE IS THE LEAST BIT OF ATTACHMENT TO ANY CONCEPT, EVEN IF IT IS NOT A BAD ONE, IT IS AN "EGOTISTICAL ATTACHMENT."
A LITTLE ATTACHMENT CLOGS UP THE MIND A LITTLE, AND A GREAT DEAL OF ATTACHMENT DOES A GREAT DEAL OF CLOGGING.
THE MAN WHO CULTIVATES TECHNIQUES OF THE MIND IS YOURSELF; THE MAN WHO STUDIES THE MARTIAL ARTS IS ALSO YOURSELF. THERE ARE NOT TWO MINDS HERE.
YOU SHOULD REFLECT ON THIS DEEPLY.

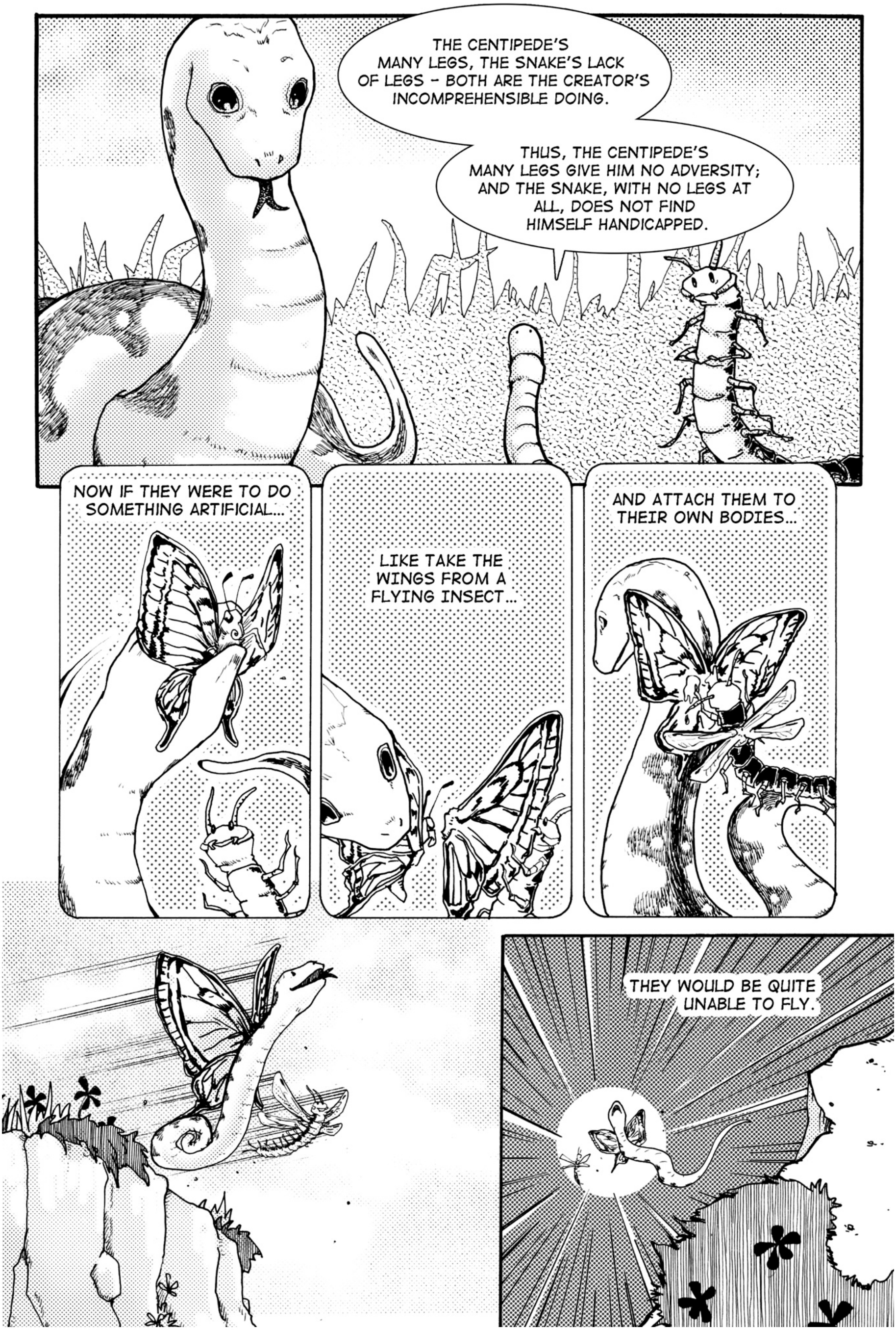
THE CENTIPEDE QUESTIONS THE SNAKE

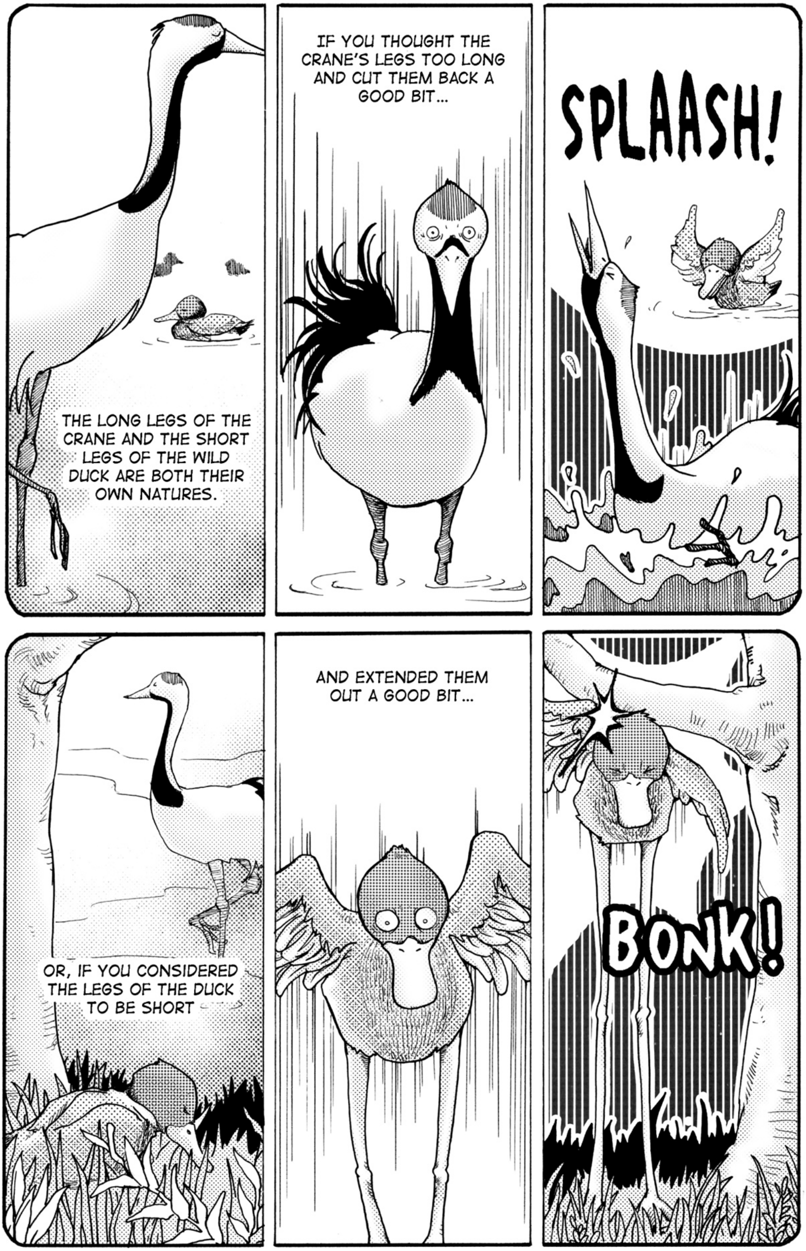


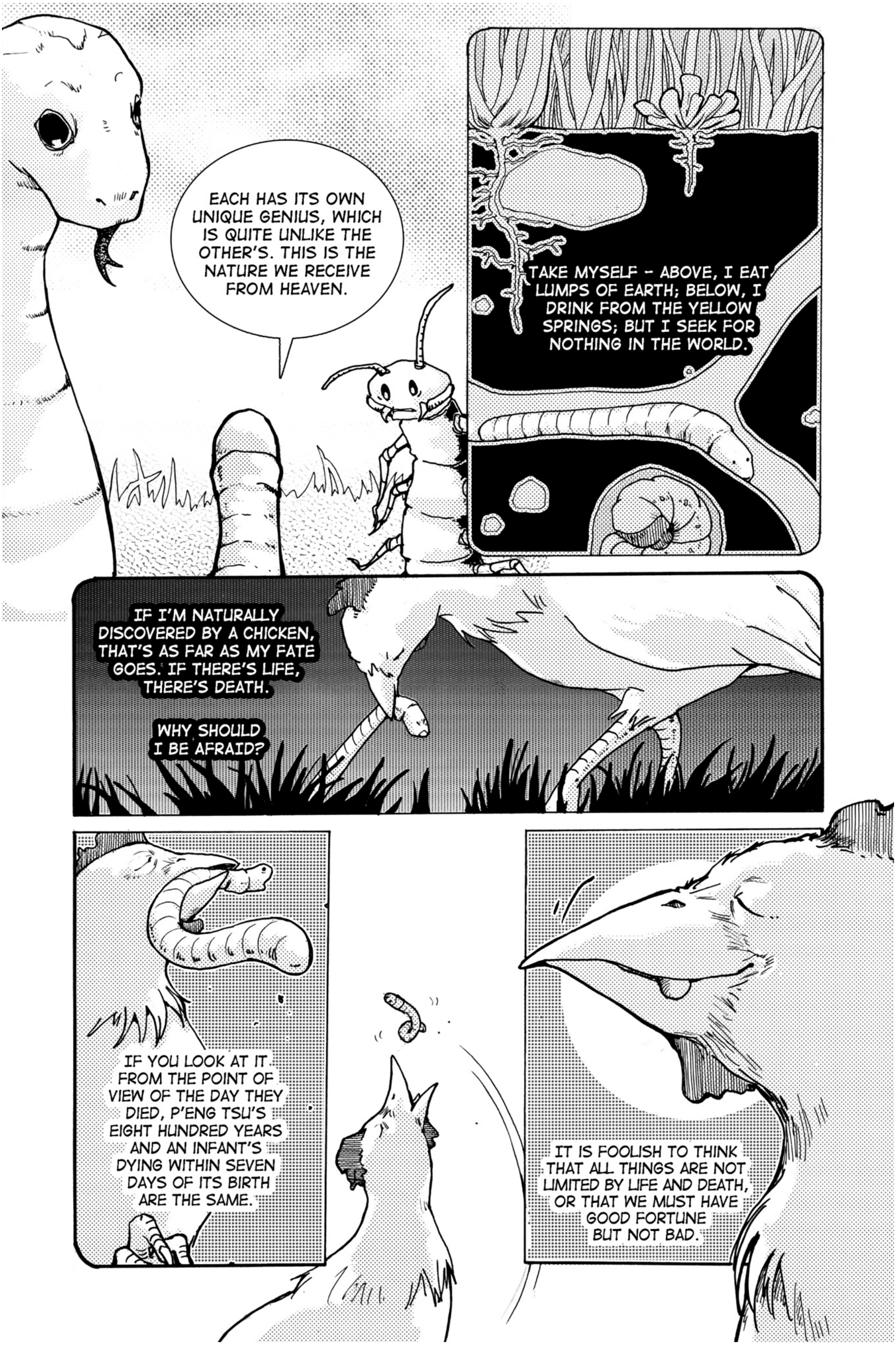

I MOVE ALONG USING A HUNDRED LEGS, BUT I STILL CAN'T GO FAST.
WHEN I'M BEING CHASED BY HUMAN BEINGS, THERE ARE TIMES I WISH I HAD WINGS.
WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I SEE YOU HAVE NO LEGS AT ALL, BUT YOU MOVE ALONG QUITE EASILY.
SURELY THIS SHOULD BE INSUFFICIENT AND YOU SHOULD BE HANDICAPPED.
WHAT TECHNIQUE DO YOU HAVE TO MOVE ALONG SO EASILY LIKE THIS WITHOUT EVEN A SINGLE LEG?

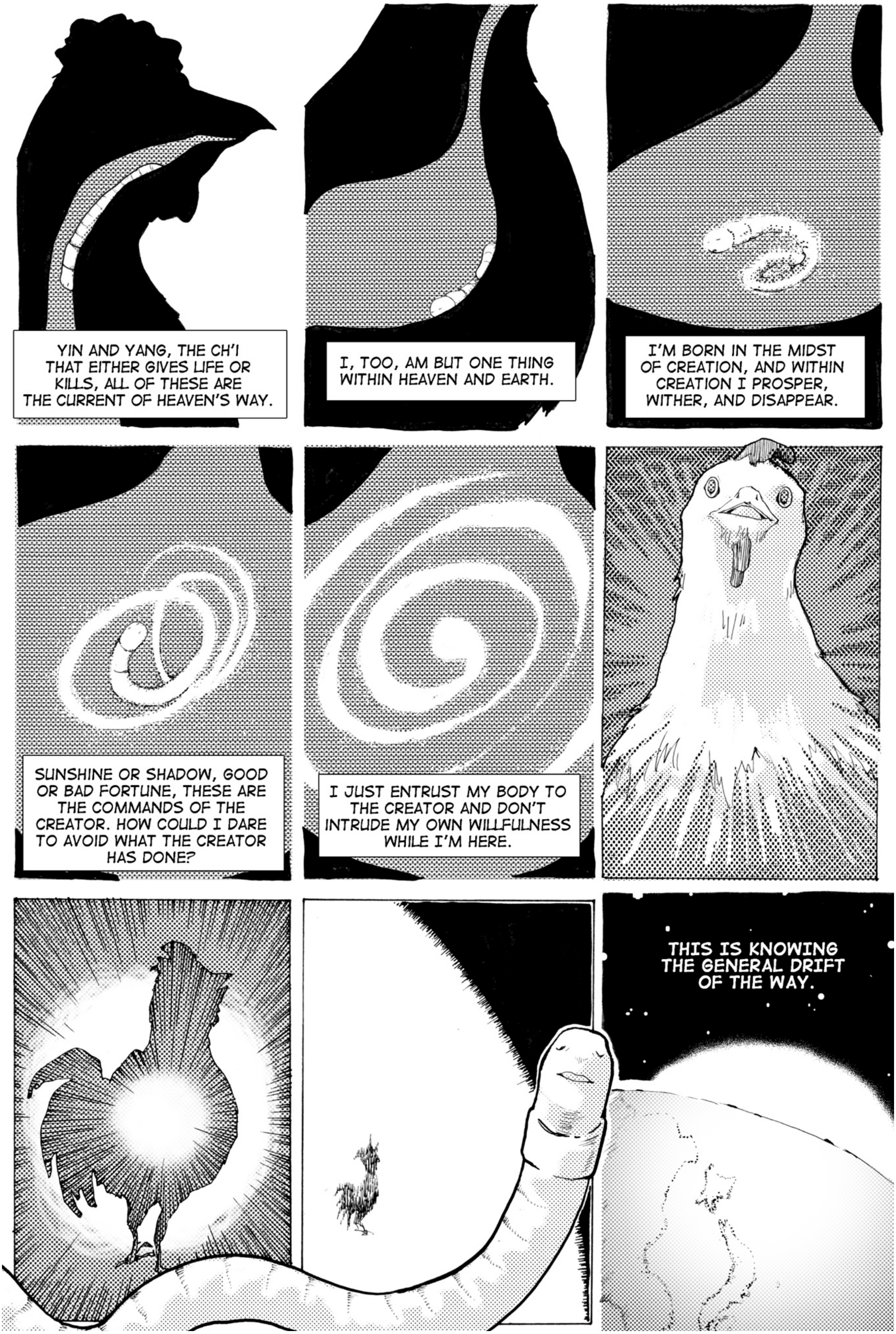

WHY SHOULD I HAVE A TECHNIQUE?
IF I SIMPLY POINT MY HEAD IN THE DIRECTION IN WHICH MY MIND WANTS TO GO, MY BODY FOLLOWS ALONG.
LOOKING AT YOU, I CAN SEE THAT YOU GO ALONG BY MOVING YOUR MANY LEGS.
SURELY WHEN THERE ARE MANY AFFAIRS, THE MIND IS PRESSED.
BY WHAT TECHNIQUE DO YOU CARRY YOUR MANY LEGS ALONG LIKE THIS WITHOUT MIXING THEM ALL UP?


IT IS NOT THAT I USE MY MANY LEGS BY PUTTING MY MIND INTO EACH ONE INDIVIDUALLY.
WHEN MY HEAVEN-GIVEN FACULTY MOVES, THEN MY HUNDRED LEGS MOVE ACCORDINGLY AND CARRY MY BODY ALONG AS WELL.
MOREOVER, MY MIND ISN'T PRESSED AT ALL, SO WHAT KIND OF SPECIAL TECHNIQUE SHOULD I USE?
WELL NOW...
MEN ARE CLEAR ENOUGH ABOUT WHAT THEY'VE UNDERSTOOD, BUT CAN'T INFER ONE THING FROM ANOTHER.
THE MEN WHO LECTURE ON THE FOUR BOOKS AND THE SIX CLASSICS WITH THEIR MAGNIFICENT AND NOBLE PRINCIPLES... WOULD NONE OF THEM UNDERSTAND COMMENTARY ON THEIR OWN MINDS.
ONCE SEPARATED FROM THEIR BOOKS, THEY ARE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE MIND AT ALL.
HOW MUCH LESS COULD THEY KNOW THIS MIND, THIS BODY, AND THE CREATION AND METAMORPHOSIS THEY ENTER AND EXIT?


THE CENTIPEDE'S MANY LEGS, THE SNAKE'S LACK OF LEGS – BOTH ARE THE CREATOR'S INCOMPREHENSIBLE DOING.
THUS, THE CENTIPEDE'S MANY LEGS GIVE HIM NO ADVERSITY; AND THE SNAKE, WITH NO LEGS AT ALL, DOES NOT FIND HIMSELF HANDICAPPED.
NOW IF THEY WERE TO DO SOMETHING ARTIFICIAL...
LIKE TAKE THE WINGS FROM A FLYING INSECT...
AND ATTACH THEM TO THEIR OWN BODIES...
THEY WOULD BE QUITE UNABLE TO FLY.

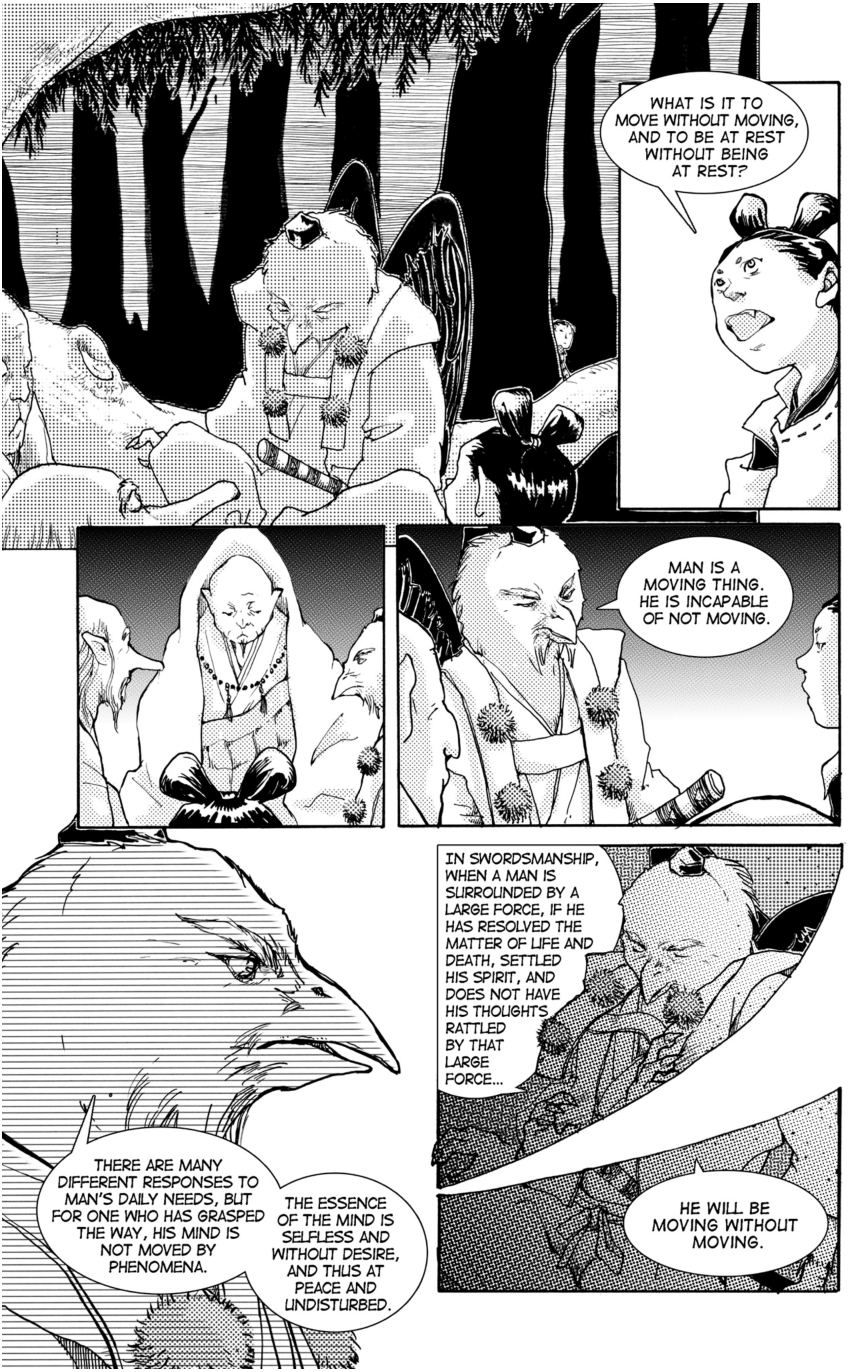

THE LONG LEGS OF THE CRANE AND THE SHORT LEGS OF THE WILD DUCK ARE BOTH THEIR OWN NATURES.
IF YOU THOUGHT THE CRANE'S LEGS TOO LONG AND CUT THEM BACK A GOOD BIT...
SPLAASH!
OR, IF YOU CONSIDERED THE LEGS OF THE DUCK TO BE SHORT
AND EXTENDED THEM OUT A GOOD BIT...
BONK!

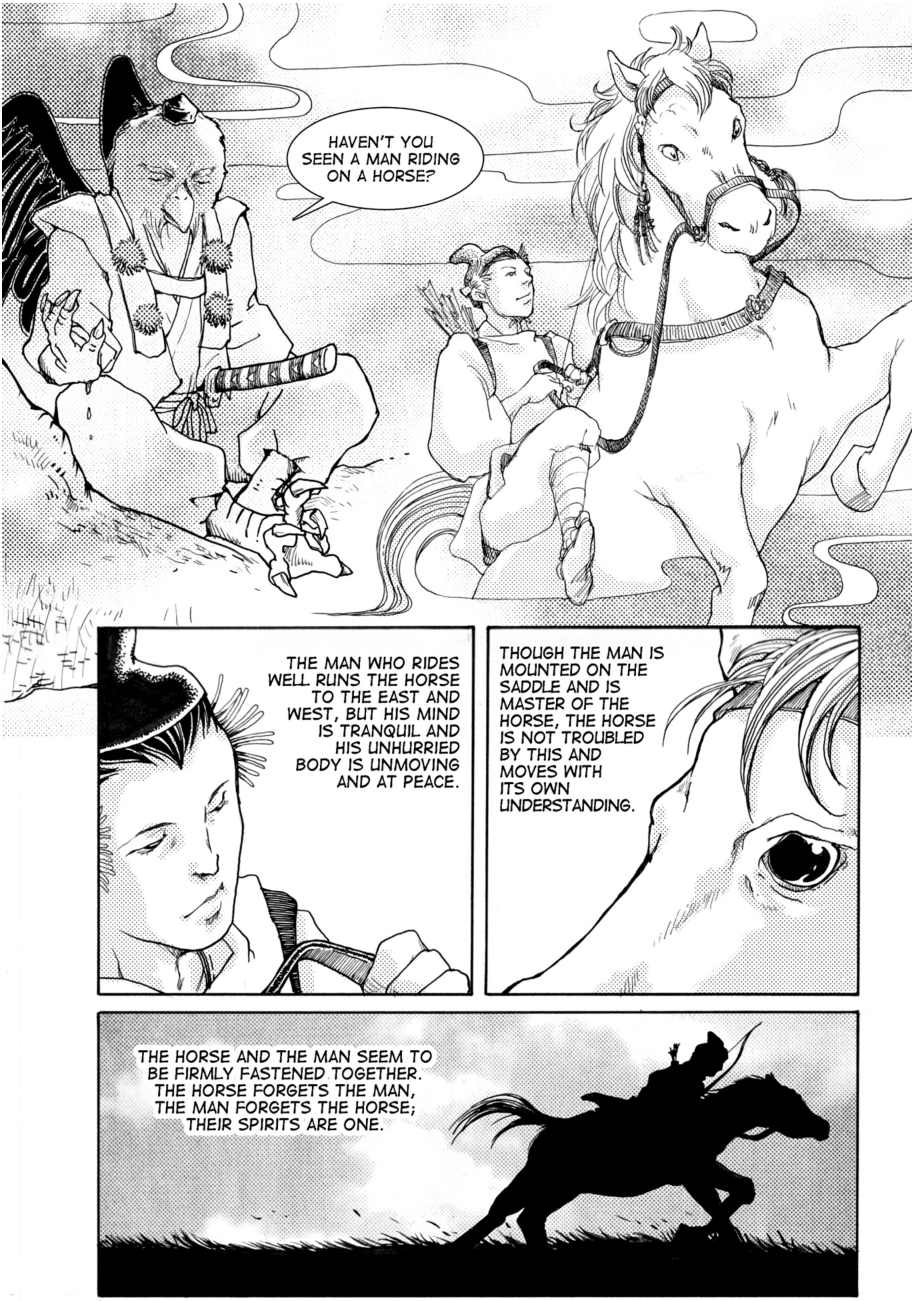

EACH HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE GENIUS, WHICH IS QUITE UNLIKE THE OTHER'S. THIS IS THE NATURE WE RECEIVE FROM HEAVEN.
TAKE MYSELF - ABOVE, I EAT LUMPS OF EARTH; BELOW, I DRINK FROM THE YELLOW SPRINGS; BUT I SEEK FOR NOTHING IN THE WORLD.
IF I'M NATURALLY DISCOVERED BY A CHICKEN, THAT'S AS FAR AS MY FATE GOES. IF THERE'S LIFE, THERE'S DEATH.
WHY SHOULD I BE AFRAID?
IF YOU LOOK AT IT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE DAY THEY DIED, P'ENG TSU'S EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS AND AN INFANT'S DYING WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF ITS BIRTH ARE THE SAME.
IT IS FOOLISH TO THINK THAT ALL THINGS ARE NOT LIMITED BY LIFE AND DEATH, OR THAT WE MUST HAVE GOOD FORTUNE BUT NOT BAD.

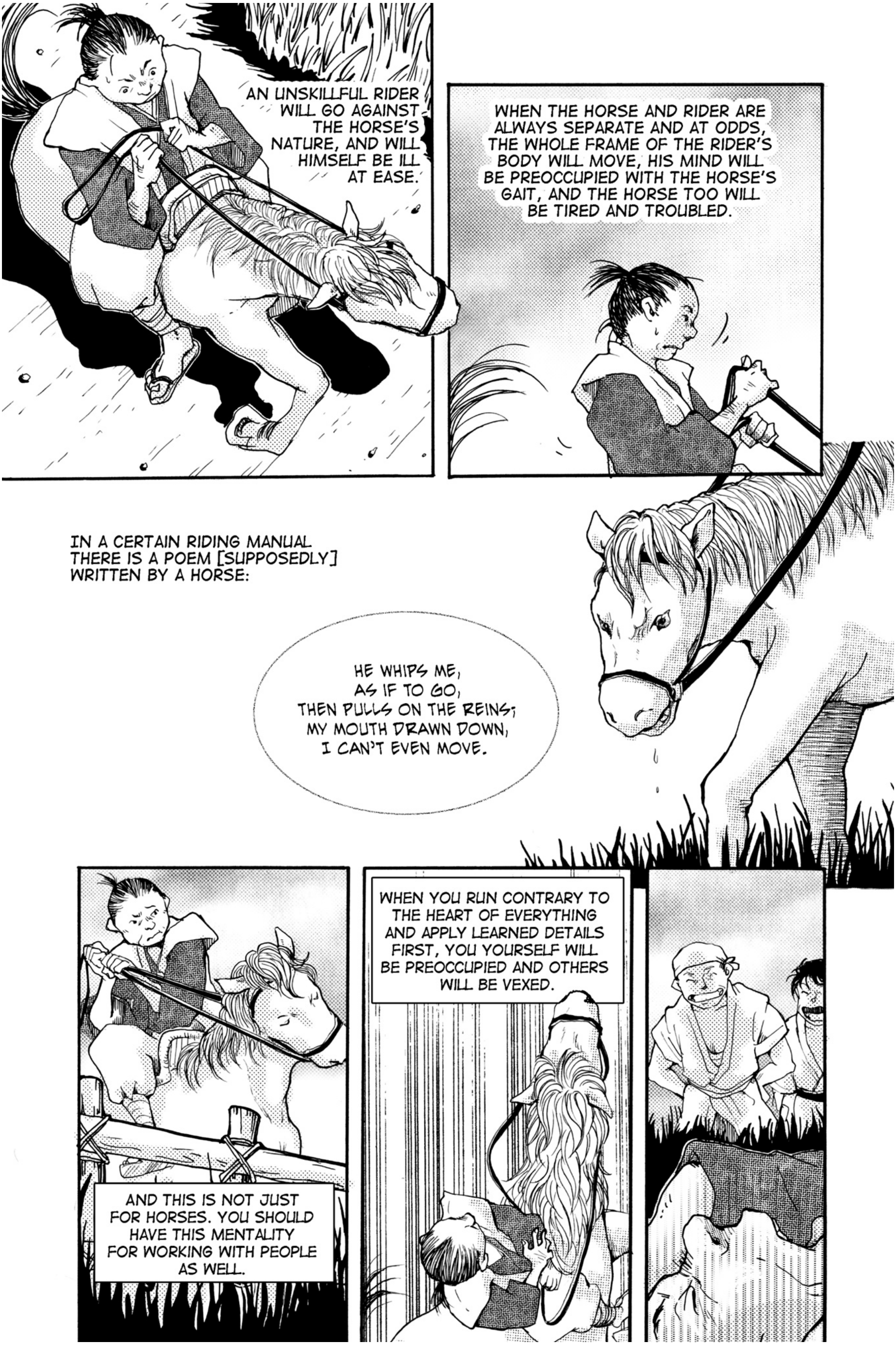

YIN AND YANG, THE CH'I THAT EITHER GIVES LIFE OR KILLS, ALL OF THESE ARE THE CURRENT OF HEAVEN'S WAY.
I, TOO, AM BUT ONE THING WITHIN HEAVEN AND EARTH.
I'M BORN IN THE MIDST OF CREATION, AND WITHIN CREATION I PROSPER, WITHER, AND DISAPPEAR.
SUNSHINE OR SHADOW, GOOD OR BAD FORTUNE, THESE ARE THE COMMANDS OF THE CREATOR. HOW COULD I DARE TO AVOID WHAT THE CREATOR HAS DONE?
I JUST ENTRUST MY BODY TO THE CREATOR AND DON'T INTRUDE MY OWN WILLFULNESS WHILE I'M HERE.
THIS IS KNOWING THE GENERAL DRIFT OF THE WAY.

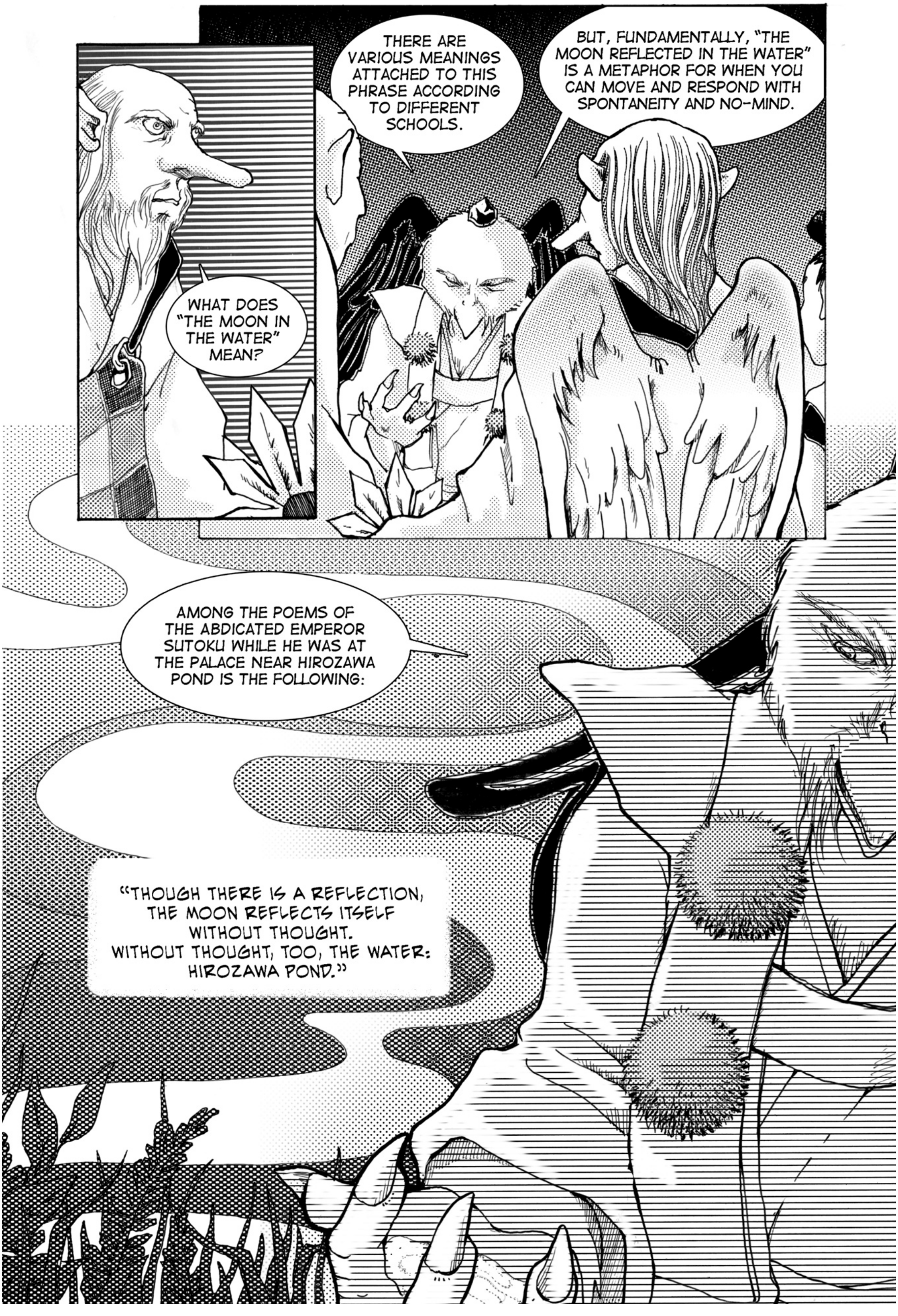
THE DEMON'S SERMON

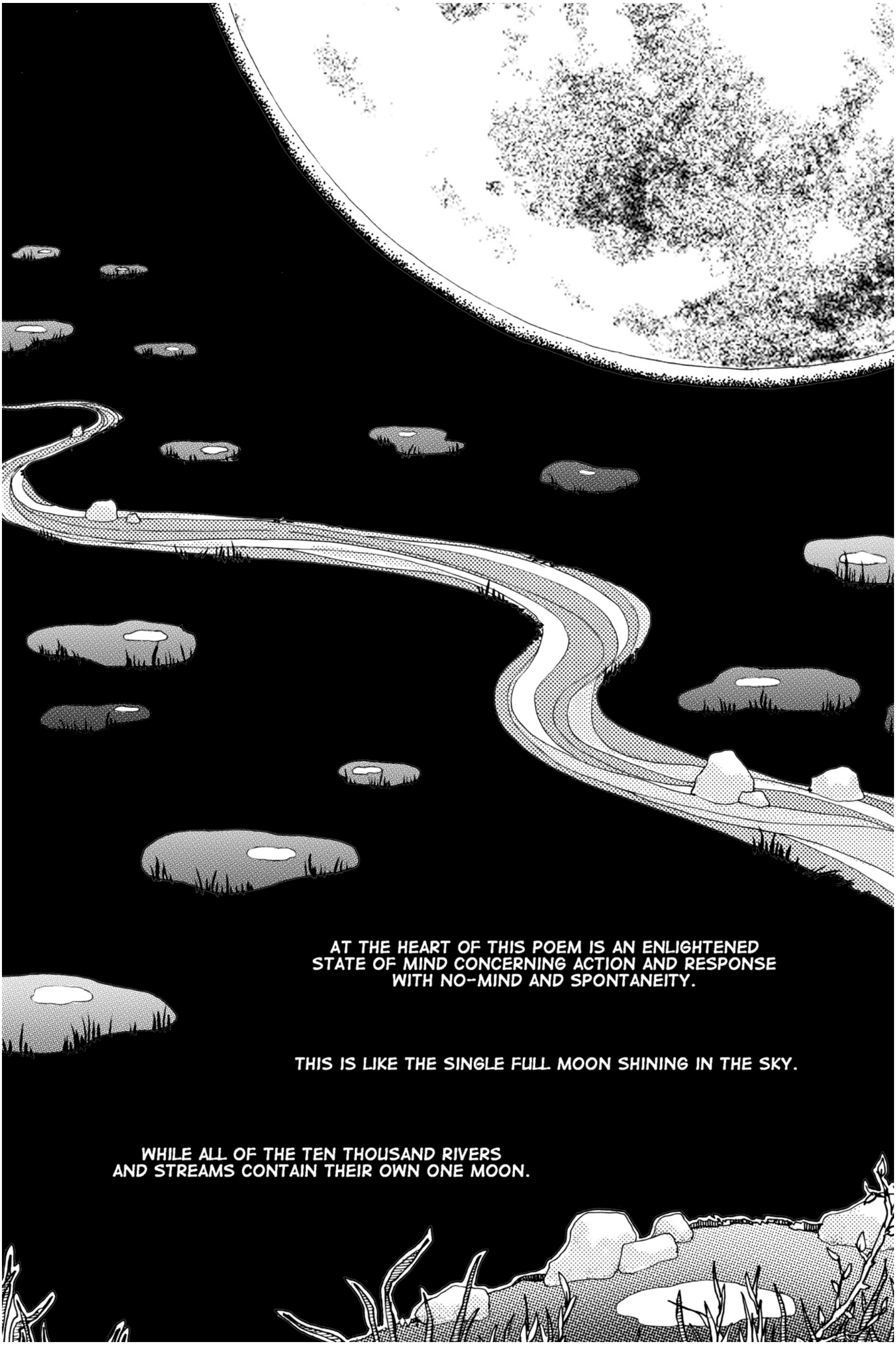
PART 4

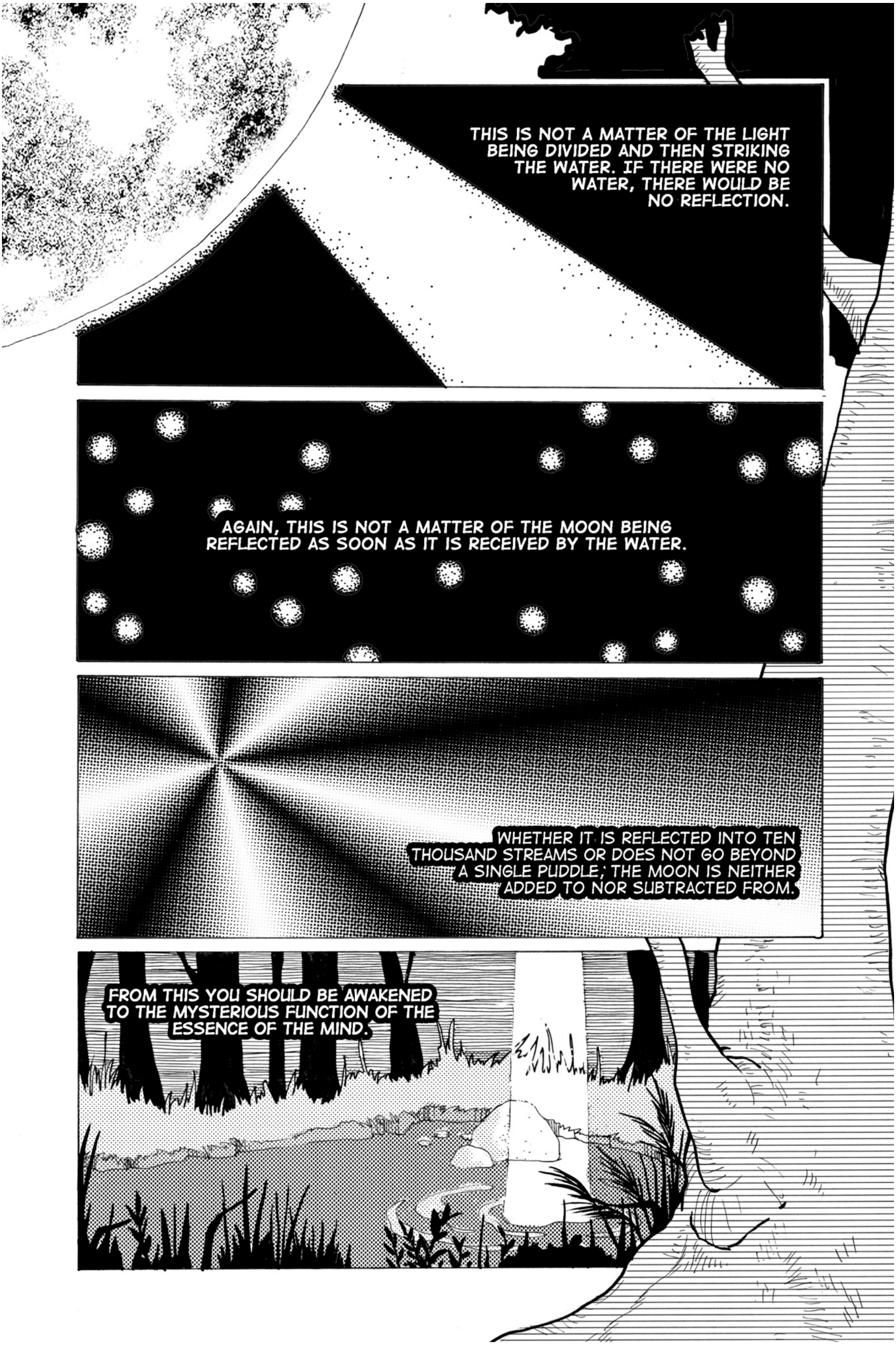

WHAT IS IT TO MOVE WITHOUT MOVING, AND TO BE AT REST WITHOUT BEING AT REST?
MAN IS A MOVING THING. HE IS INCAPABLE OF NOT MOVING.
IN SWORDSMANSHIP, WHEN A MAN IS SURROUNDED BY A LARGE FORCE, IF HE HAS RESOLVED THE MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH, SETTLED HIS SPIRIT, AND DOES NOT HAVE HIS THOUGHTS RATTLED BY THAT LARGE FORCE...
HE WILL BE MOVING WITHOUT MOVING.
THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO MAN'S DAILY NEEDS, BUT FOR ONE WHO HAS GRASPED THE WAY, HIS MIND IS NOT MOVED BY PHENOMENA.
THE ESSENCE OF THE MIND IS SELFLESS AND WITHOUT DESIRE, AND THUS AT PEACE AND UNDISTURBED.

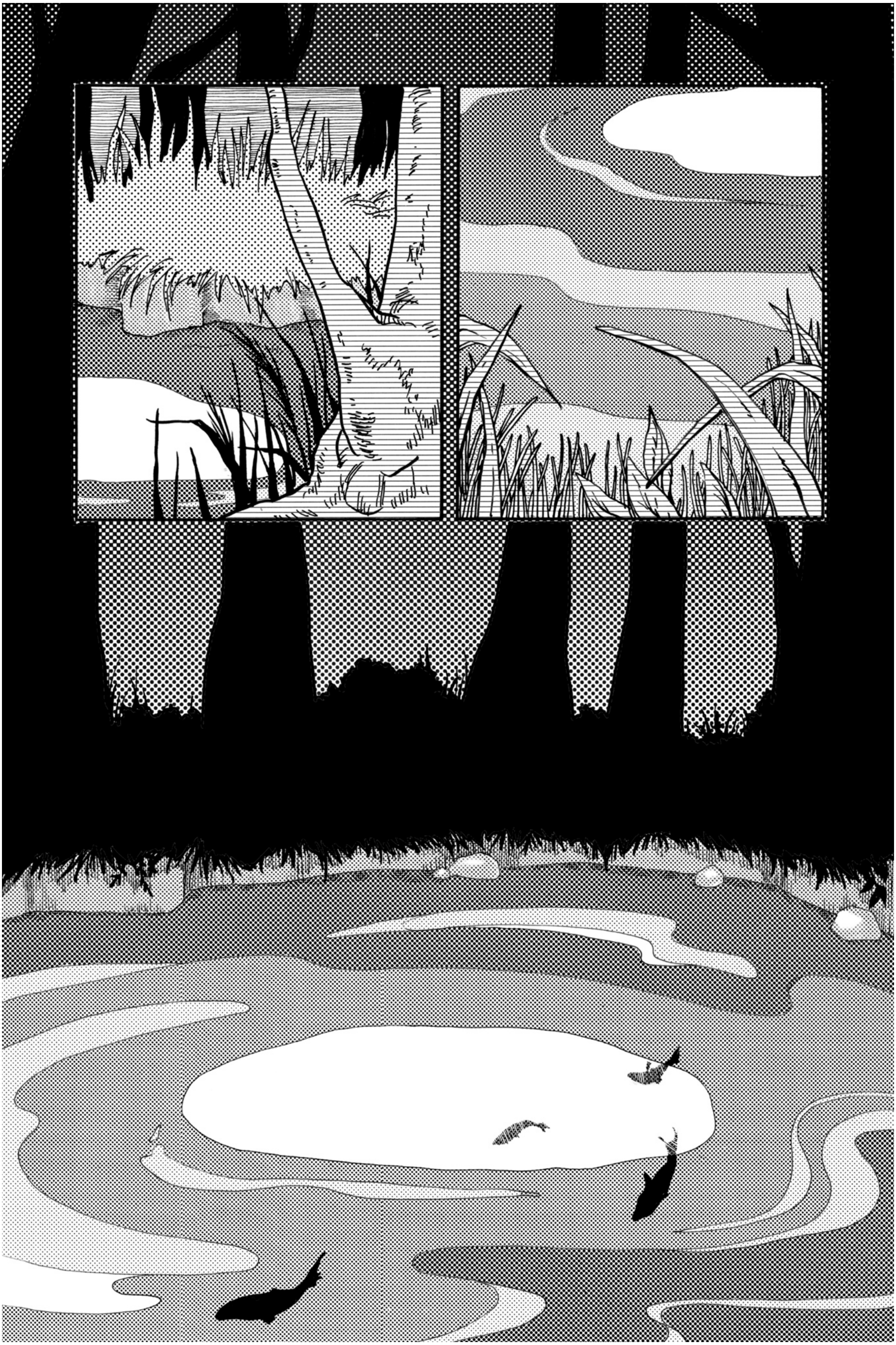

HAVEN'T YOU SEEN A MAN RIDING ON A HORSE?
THE MAN WHO RIDES WELL RUNS THE HORSE TO THE EAST AND WEST, BUT HIS MIND IS TRANQUIL AND HIS UNHURRIED BODY IS UNMOVING AND AT PEACE.
THOUGH THE MAN IS MOUNTED ON THE SADDLE AND IS MASTER OF THE HORSE, THE HORSE IS NOT TROUBLED BY THIS AND MOVES WITH ITS OWN UNDERSTANDING.
THE HORSE AND THE MAN SEEM TO BE FIRMLY FASTENED TOGETHER. THE HORSE FORGETS THE MAN, THE MAN FORGETS THE HORSE; THEIR SPIRITS ARE ONE.


AN UNSKILLFUL RIDER WILL GO AGAINST THE HORSE'S NATURE, AND WILL HIMSELF BE ILL AT EASE.
WHEN THE HORSE AND RIDER ARE ALWAYS SEPARATE AND AT ODDS, THE WHOLE FRAME OF THE RIDER'S BODY WILL MOVE, HIS MIND WILL BE PREOCCUPIED WITH THE HORSE'S GAIT, AND THE HORSE TOO WILL BE TIRED AND TROUBLED.
IN A CERTAIN RIDING MANUAL THERE IS A POEM [SUPPOSEDLY] WRITTEN BY A HORSE:
HE WHIPS ME, AS IF TO GO, THEN PULLS ON THE REINS; MY MOUTH DRAWN DOWN, I CAN'T EVEN MOVE.
AND THIS IS NOT JUST FOR HORSES. YOU SHOULD HAVE THIS MENTALITY FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE AS WELL.
WHEN YOU RUN CONTRARY TO THE HEART OF EVERYTHING AND APPLY LEARNED DETAILS FIRST, YOU YOURSELF WILL BE PREOCCUPIED AND OTHERS WILL BE VEXED.

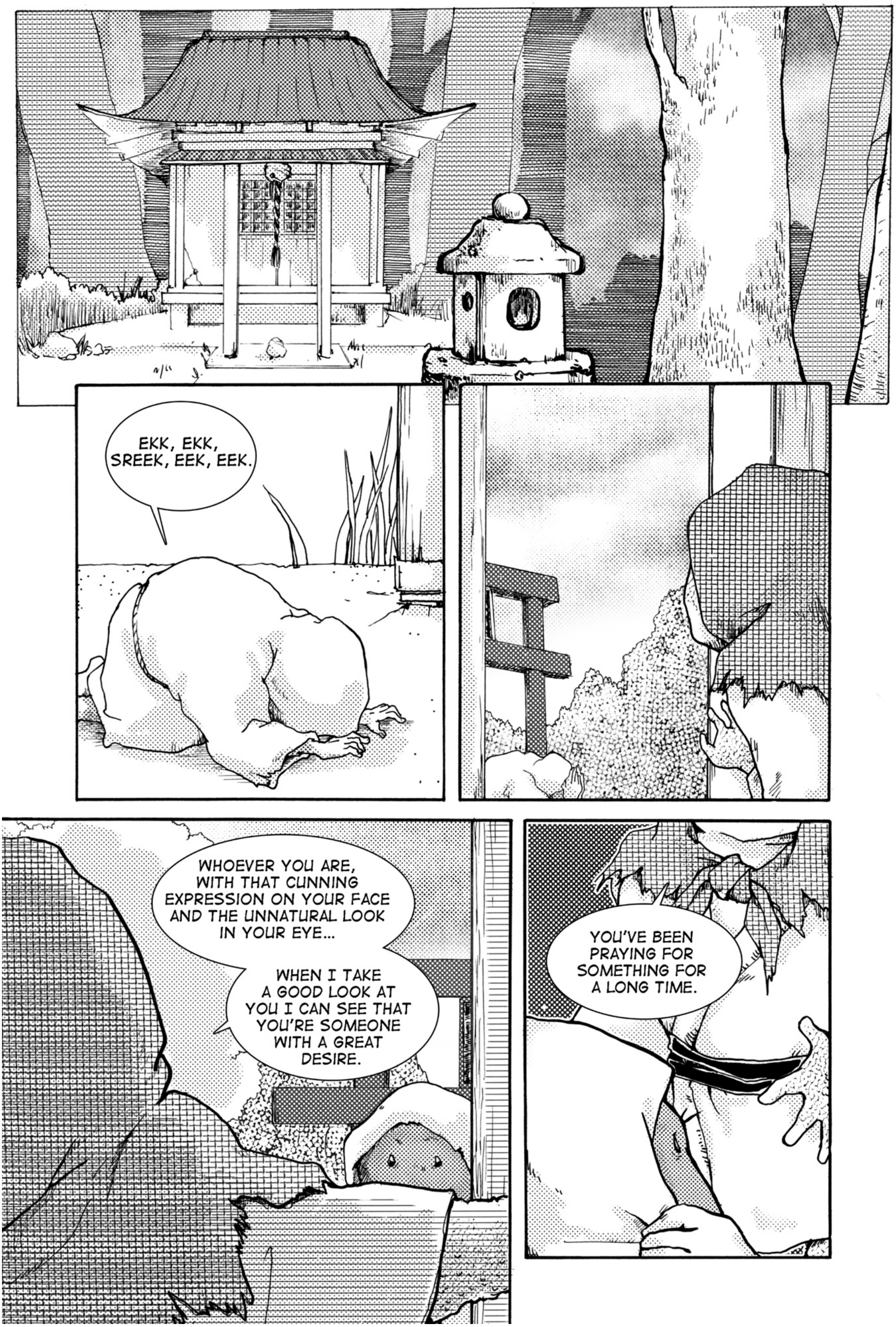

WHAT DOES "THE MOON IN THE WATER" MEAN?
THERE ARE VARIOUS MEANINGS ATTACHED TO THIS PHRASE ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT SCHOOLS.
BUT, FUNDAMENTALLY, "THE MOON REFLECTED IN THE WATER" IS A METAPHOR FOR WHEN YOU CAN MOVE AND RESPOND WITH SPONTANEITY AND NO-MIND.
AMONG THE POEMS OF THE ABDICATED EMPEROR SUTOKU WHILE HE WAS AT THE PALACE NEAR HIROZAWA POND IS THE FOLLOWING:
"THOUGH THERE IS A REFLECTION, THE MOON REFLECTS ITSELF WITHOUT THOUGHT. WITHOUT THOUGHT, TOO, THE WATER: HIROZAWA POND."

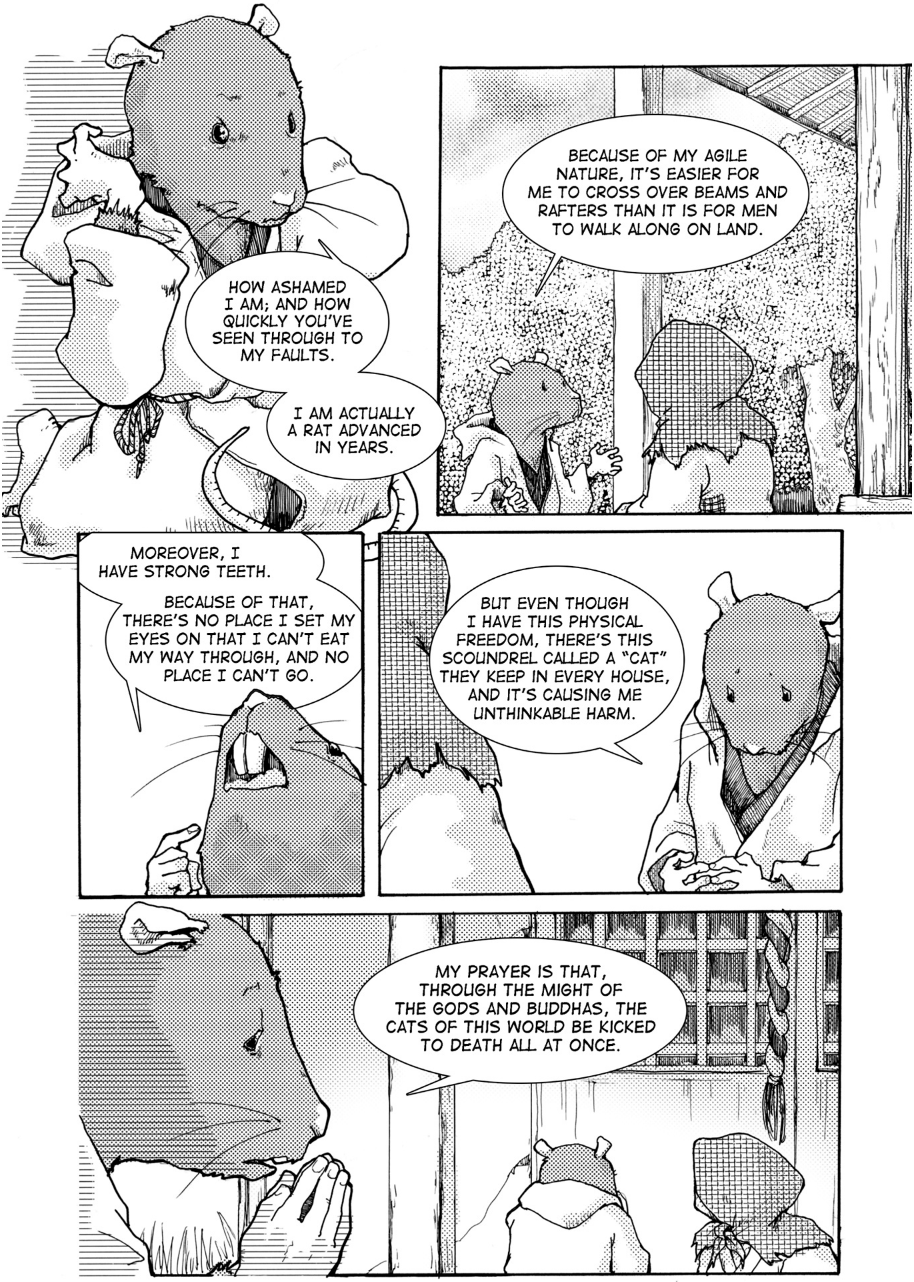

AT THE HEART OF THIS POEM IS AN ENLIGHTENED STATE OF MIND CONCERNING ACTION AND RESPONSE WITH NO-MIND AND SPONTANEITY.
THIS IS LIKE THE SINGLE FULL MOON SHINING IN THE SKY.
WHILE ALL OF THE TEN THOUSAND RIVERS AND STREAMS CONTAIN THEIR OWN ONE MOON.

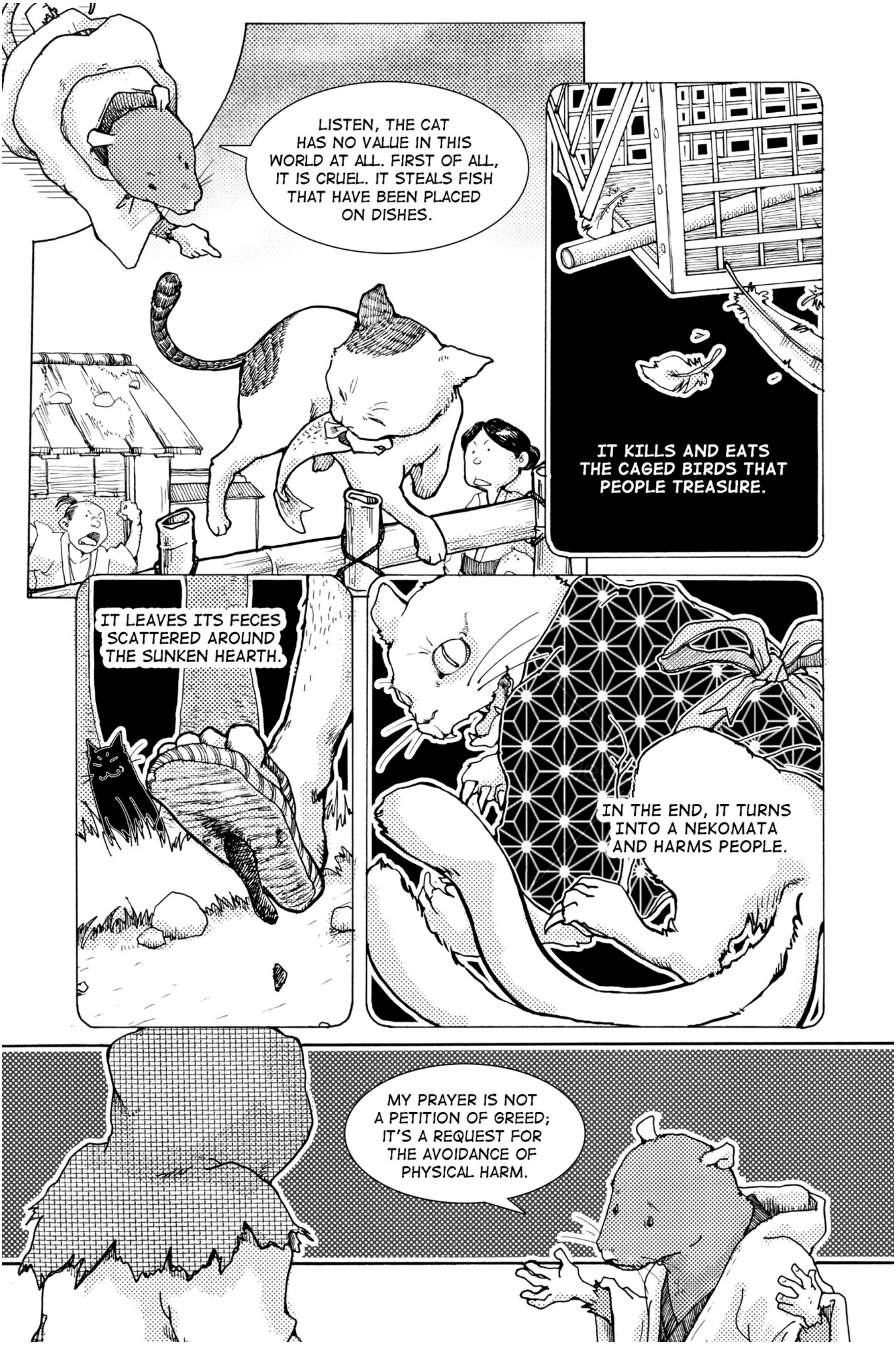

THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF THE LIGHT BEING DIVIDED AND THEN STRIKING THE WATER. IF THERE WERE NO WATER, THERE WOULD BE NO REFLECTION.
AGAIN, THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF THE MOON BEING REFLECTED AS SOON AS IT IS RECEIVED BY THE WATER.
WHETHER IT IS REFLECTED INTO TEN THOUSAND STREAMS OR DOES NOT GO BEYOND A SINGLE PUDDLE, THE MOON IS NEITHER ADDED TO NOR SUBTRACTED FROM.
FROM THIS YOU SHOULD BE AWAKENED TO THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTION OF THE ESSENCE OF THE MIND.

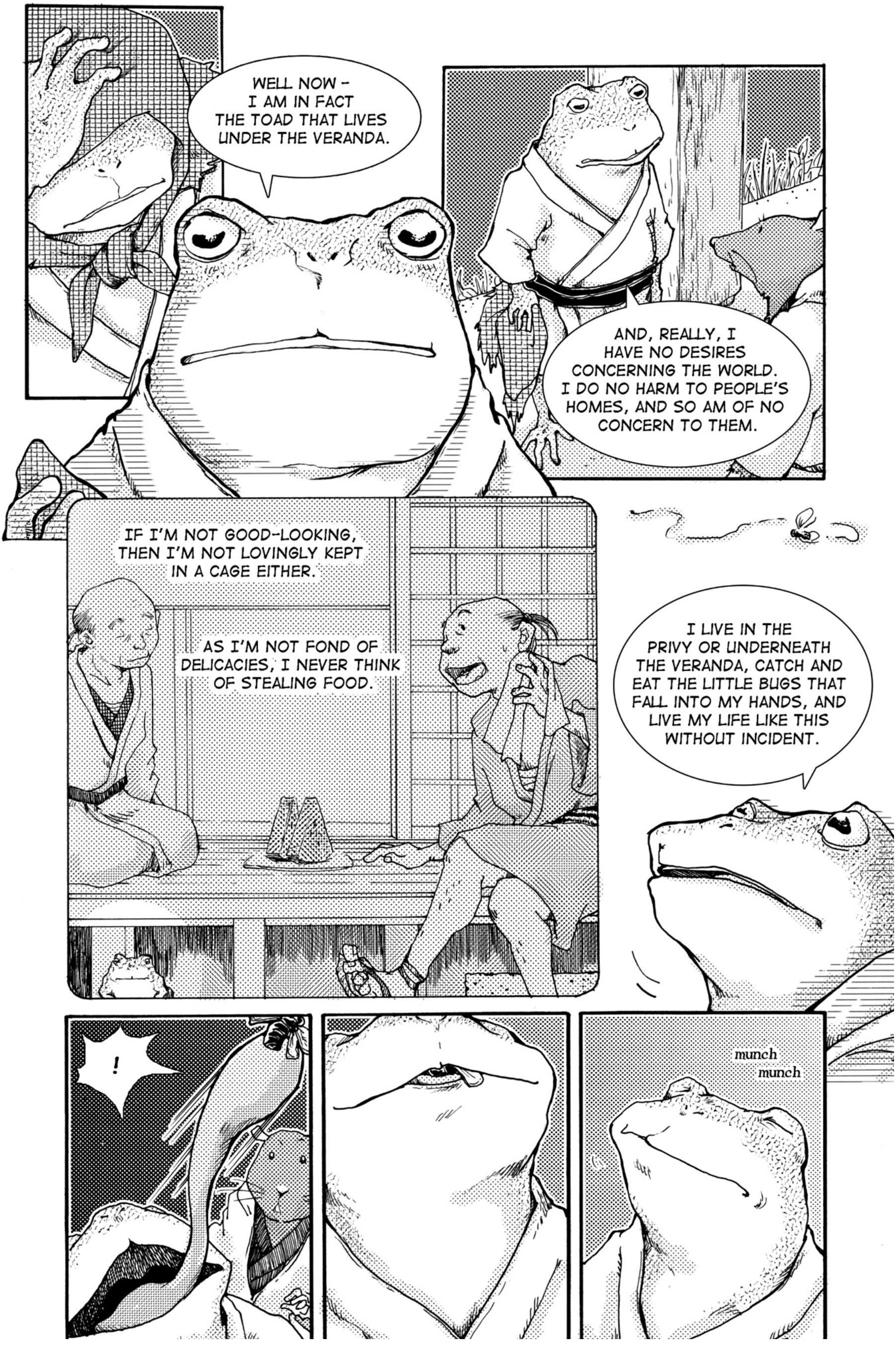


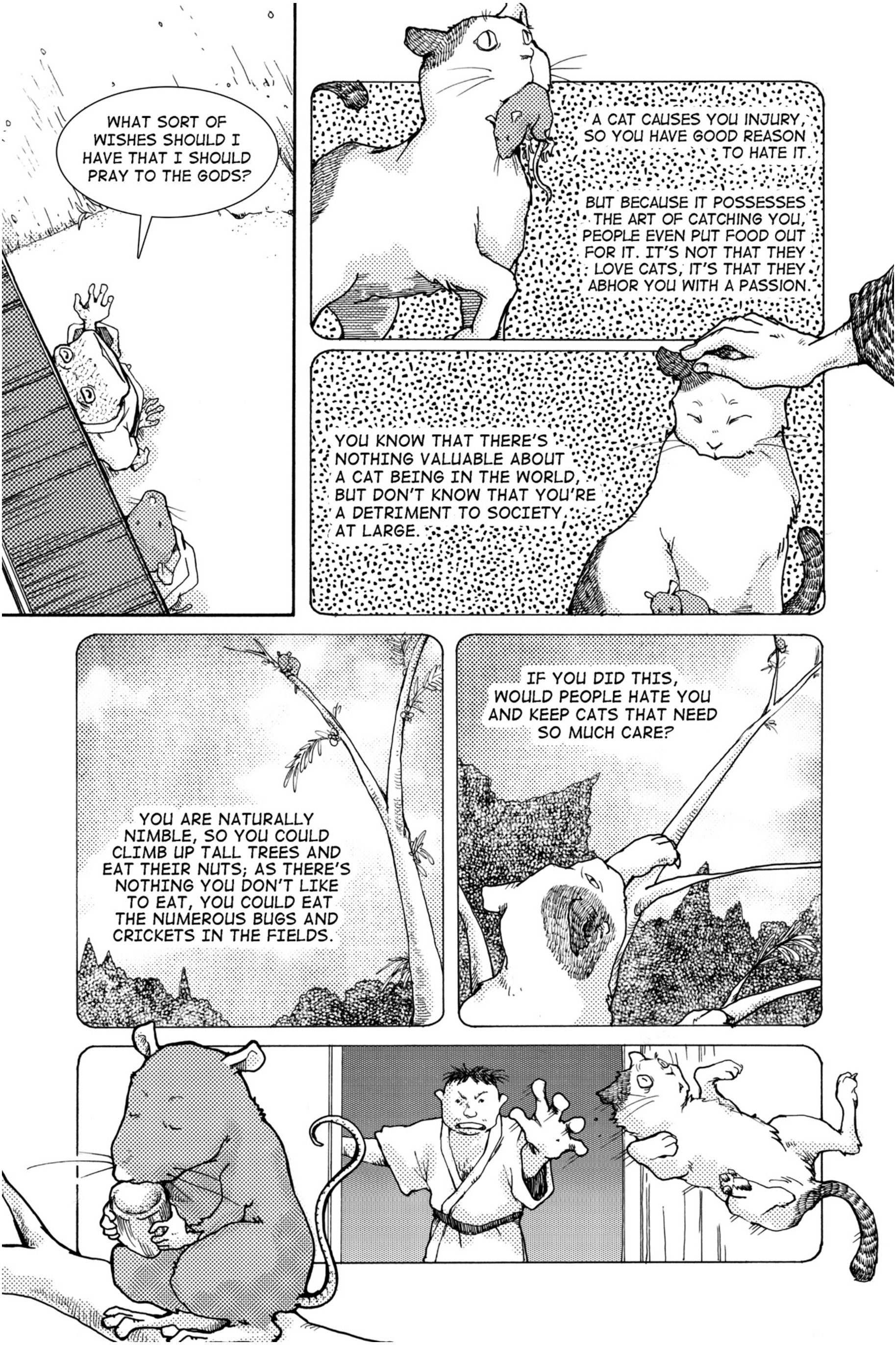
THE TOAD'S WAY OF THE GODS

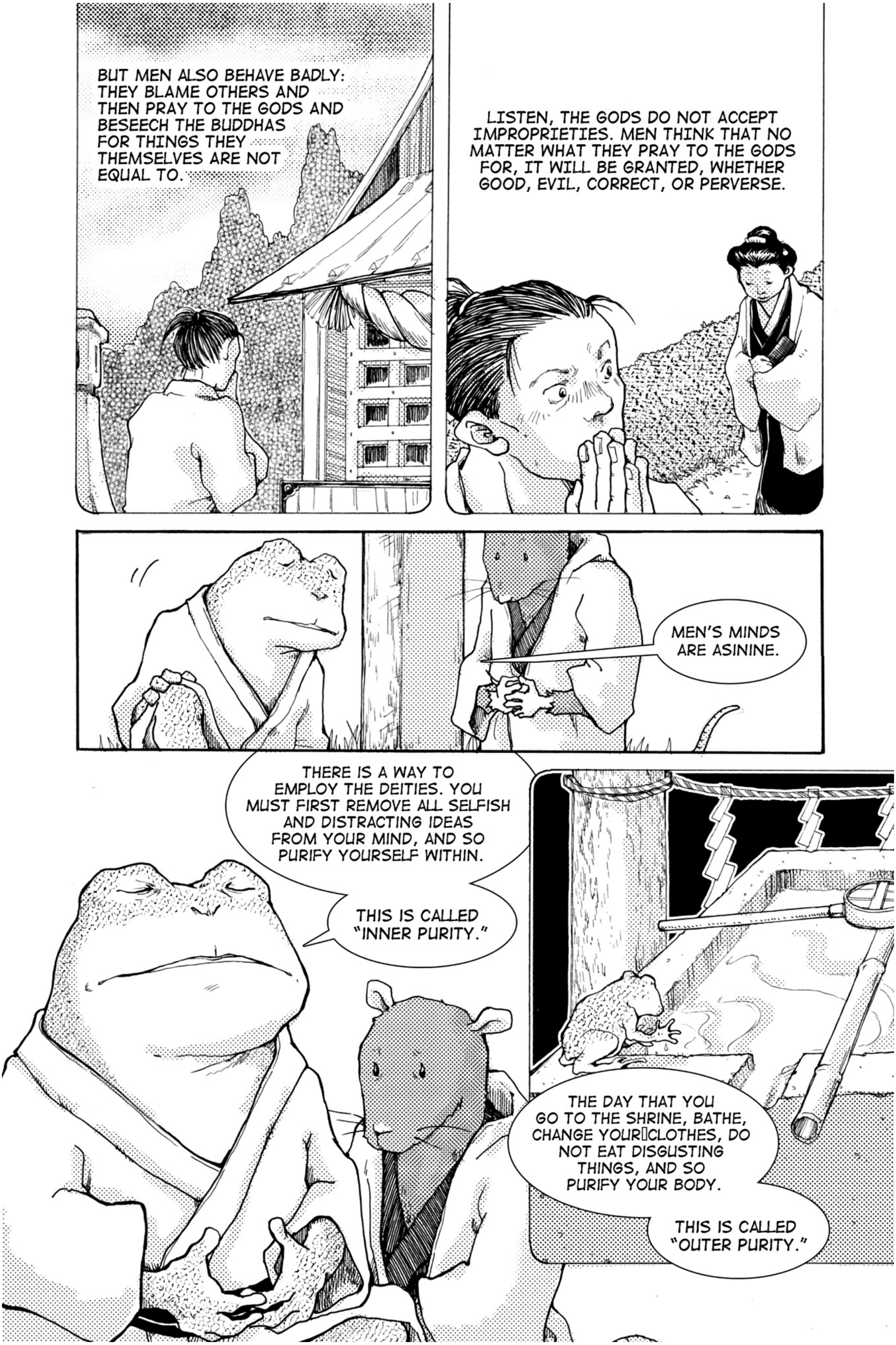

EKK, EKK, SREEK, EEK, EEK.
WHOEVER YOU ARE, WITH THAT CUNNING EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE AND THE UNNATURAL LOOK IN YOUR EYE...
WHEN I TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOU I CAN SEE THAT YOU'RE SOMEONE WITH A GREAT DESIRE.
YOU'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR SOMETHING FOR A LONG TIME.

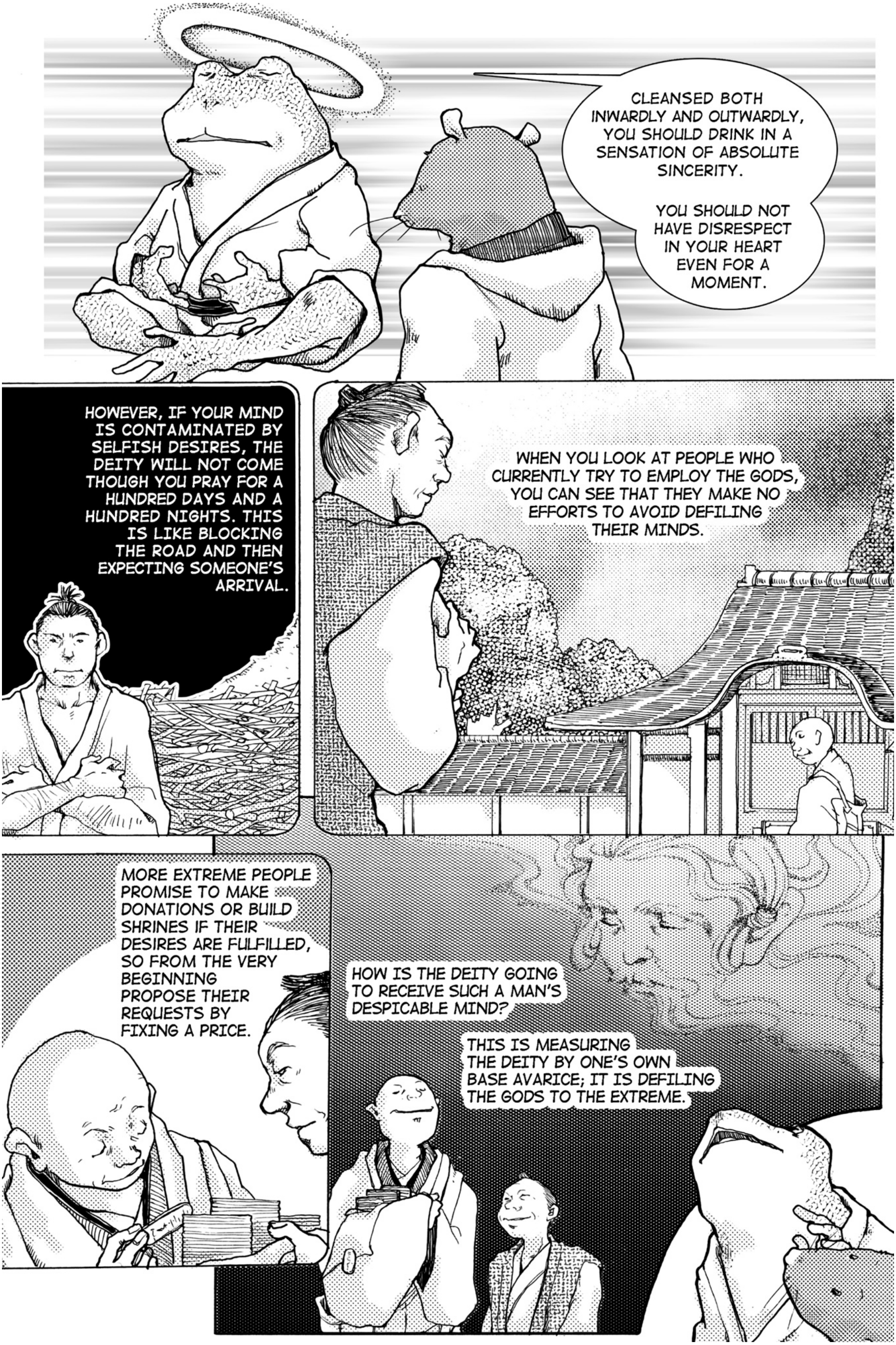

How ashamed I am; and how quickly you've seen through to my faults.
I am actually a rat advanced in years.
Because of my agile nature, it's easier for me to cross over beams and rafters than it is for men to walk along on land.
Moreover, I have strong teeth.
Because of that, there's no place I set my eyes on that I can't eat my way through, and no place I can't go.
But even though I have this physical freedom, there's this scoundrel called a "cat" they keep in every house, and it's causing me unthinkable harm.
My prayer is that, through the might of the gods and Buddhas, the cats of this world be kicked to death all at once.

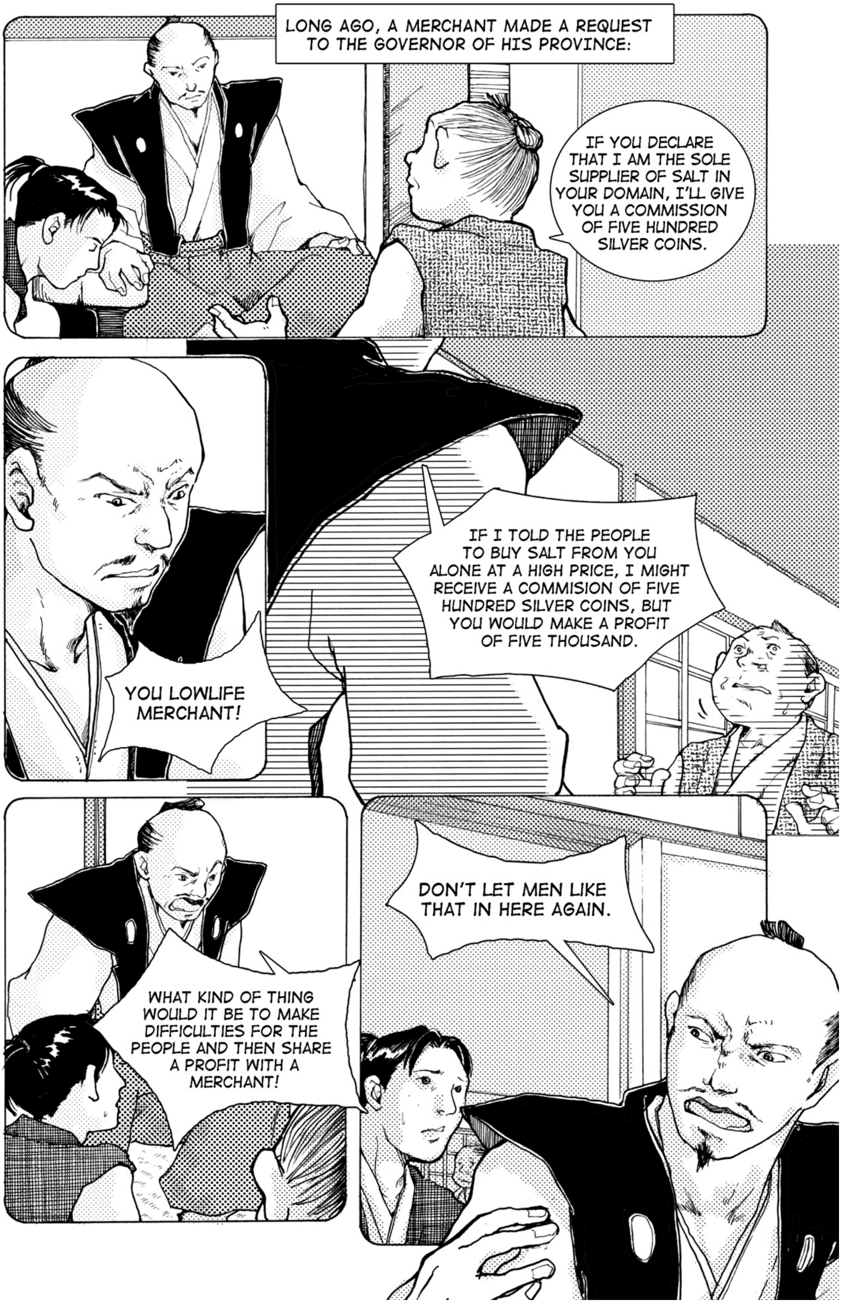

LISTEN, THE CAT HAS NO VALUE IN THIS WORLD AT ALL. FIRST OF ALL, IT IS CRUEL. IT STEALS FISH THAT HAVE BEEN PLACED ON DISHES.
IT KILLS AND EATS THE CAGED BIRDS THAT PEOPLE TREASURE.
IT LEAVES ITS FECES SCATTERED AROUND THE SUNKEN HEARTH.
IN THE END, IT TURNS INTO A NEKOMATA AND HARMS PEOPLE.
MY PRAYER IS NOT A PETITION OF GREED; IT'S A REQUEST FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF PHYSICAL HARM.

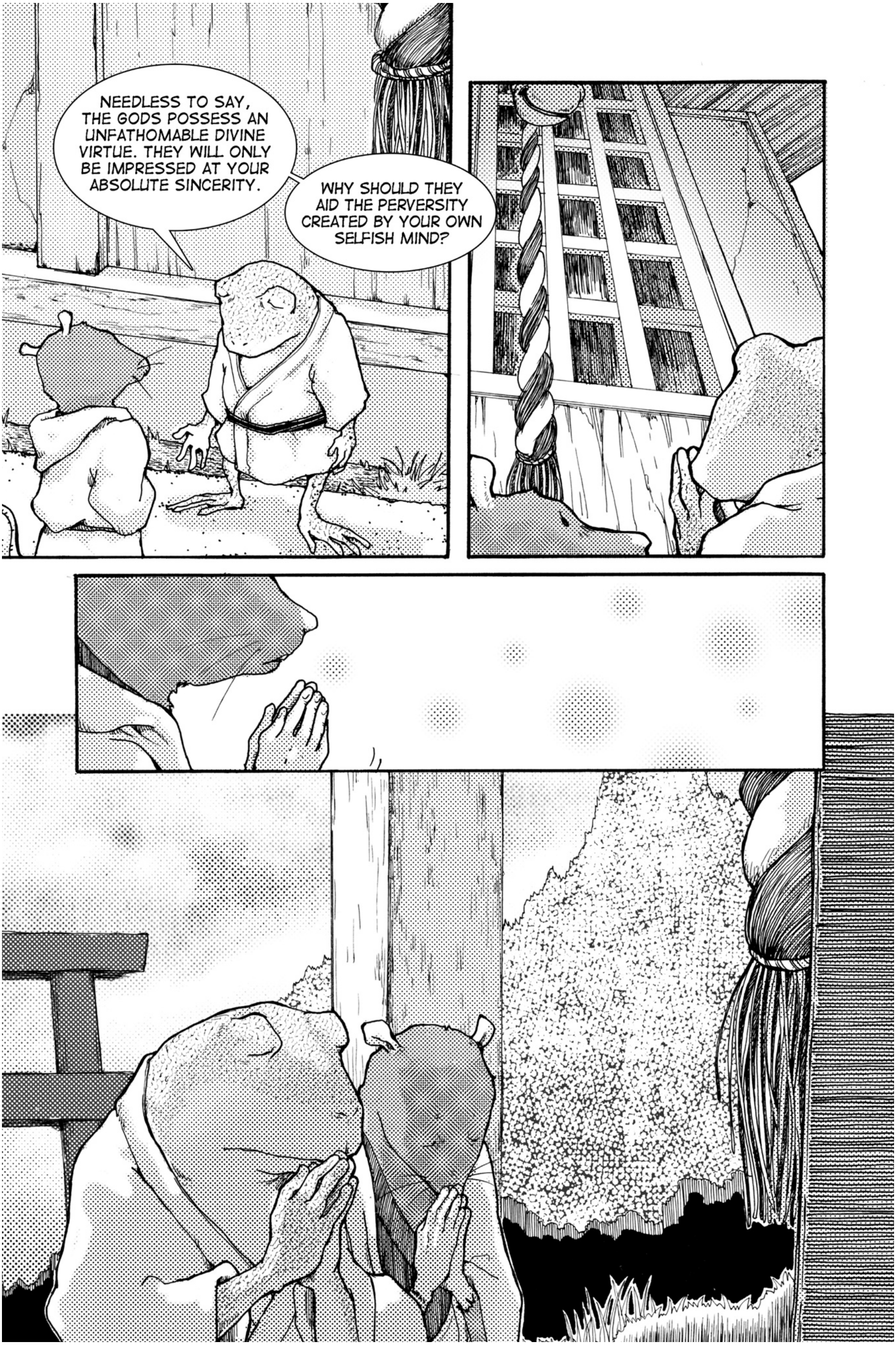

WELL NOW – I AM IN FACT THE TOAD THAT LIVES UNDER THE VERANDA.
AND, REALLY, I HAVE NO DESIRES CONCERNING THE WORLD. I DO NO HARM TO PEOPLE'S HOMES, AND SO AM OF NO CONCERN TO THEM.
IF I'M NOT GOOD-LOOKING, THEN I'M NOT LOVINGLY KEPT IN A CAGE EITHER.
AS I'M NOT FOND OF DELICACIES, I NEVER THINK OF STEALING FOOD.
I LIVE IN THE PRIVY OR UNDERNEATH THE VERANDA, CATCH AND EAT THE LITTLE BUGS THAT FALL INTO MY HANDS, AND LIVE MY LIFE LIKE THIS WITHOUT INCIDENT.
!
munch
munch


WHAT SORT OF WISHES SHOULD I HAVE THAT I SHOULD PRAY TO THE GODS?
A CAT CAUSES YOU INJURY, SO YOU HAVE GOOD REASON TO HATE IT.
BUT BECAUSE IT POSSESSES THE ART OF CATCHING YOU, PEOPLE EVEN PUT FOOD OUT FOR IT. IT'S NOT THAT THEY LOVE CATS, IT'S THAT THEY ABHOR YOU WITH A PASSION.
YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S NOTHING VALUABLE ABOUT A CAT BEING IN THE WORLD, BUT DON'T KNOW THAT YOU'RE A DETRIMENT TO SOCIETY AT LARGE.
YOU ARE NATURALLY NIMBLE, SO YOU COULD CLIMB UP TALL TREES AND EAT THEIR NUTS; AS THERE'S NOTHING YOU DON'T LIKE TO EAT, YOU COULD EAT THE NUMEROUS BUGS AND CRICKETS IN THE FIELDS.
IF YOU DID THIS, WOULD PEOPLE HATE YOU AND KEEP CATS THAT NEED SO MUCH CARE?

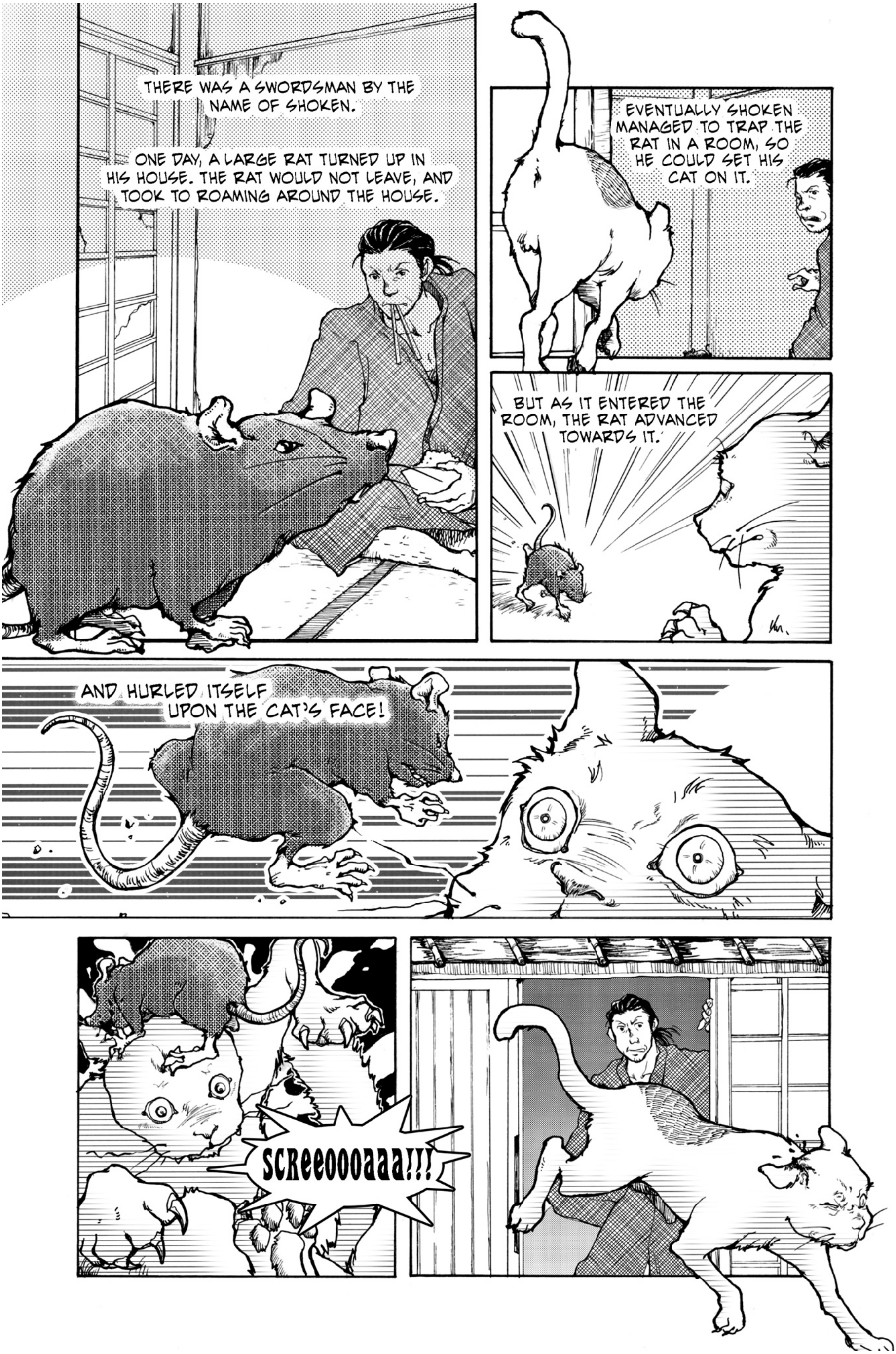

BUT MEN ALSO BEHAVE BADLY: THEY BLAME OTHERS AND THEN PRAY TO THE GODS AND BESEECH THE BUDDHAS FOR THINGS THEY THEMSELVES ARE NOT EQUAL TO.
LISTEN, THE GODS DO NOT ACCEPT IMPROPRIETIES. MEN THINK THAT NO MATTER WHAT THEY PRAY TO THE GODS FOR, IT WILL BE GRANTED, WHETHER GOOD, EVIL, CORRECT, OR PERVERSE.
MEN'S MINDS ARE ASININE.
THERE IS A WAY TO EMPLOY THE DEITIES. YOU MUST FIRST REMOVE ALL SELFISH AND DISTRACTING IDEAS FROM YOUR MIND, AND SO PURIFY YOURSELF WITHIN.
THIS IS CALLED "INNER PURITY."
THE DAY THAT YOU GO TO THE SHRINE, BATHE, CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES, DO NOT EAT DISGUSTING THINGS, AND SO PURIFY YOUR BODY.
THIS IS CALLED "OUTER PURITY."

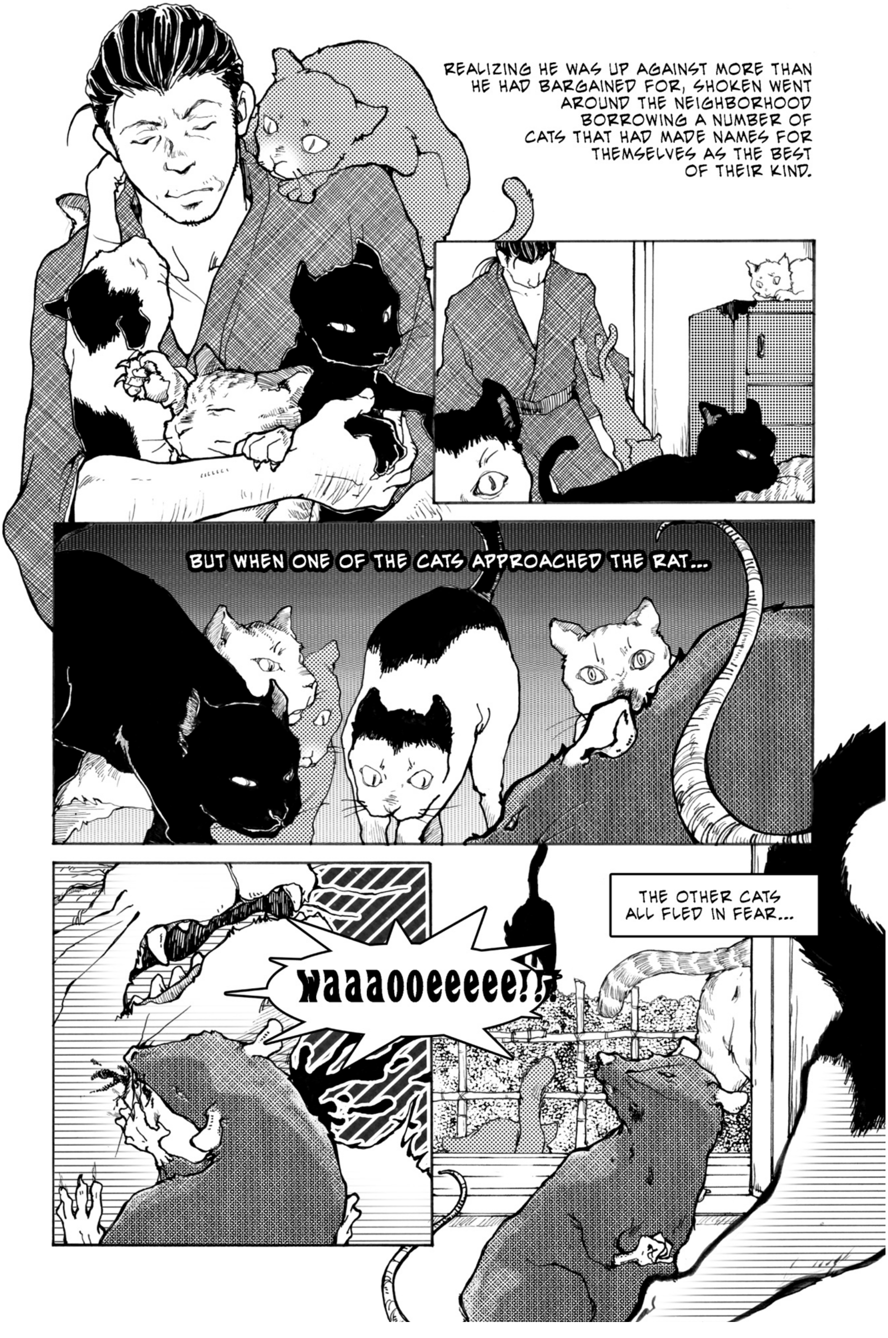

CLEANSED BOTH INWARDLY AND OUTWARDLY, YOU SHOULD DRINK IN A SENSATION OF ABSOLUTE SINCERITY.
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE DISRESPECT IN YOUR HEART EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
HOWEVER, IF YOUR MIND IS CONTAMINATED BY SELFISH DESIRES, THE DEITY WILL NOT COME THOUGH YOU PRAY FOR A HUNDRED DAYS AND A HUNDRED NIGHTS. THIS IS LIKE BLOCKING THE ROAD AND THEN EXPECTING SOMEONE'S ARRIVAL.
WHEN YOU LOOK AT PEOPLE WHO CURRENTLY TRY TO EMPLOY THE GODS, YOU CAN SEE THAT THEY MAKE NO EFFORTS TO AVOID DEFILING THEIR MINDS.
MORE EXTREME PEOPLE PROMISE TO MAKE DONATIONS OR BUILD SHRINES IF THEIR DESIRES ARE FULFILLED, SO FROM THE VERY BEGINNING PROPOSE THEIR REQUESTS BY FIXING A PRICE.
HOW IS THE DEITY GOING TO RECEIVE SUCH A MAN'S DESPICABLE MIND?
THIS IS MEASURING THE DEITY BY ONE'S OWN BASE AVARICE; IT IS DEFILING THE GODS TO THE EXTREME.

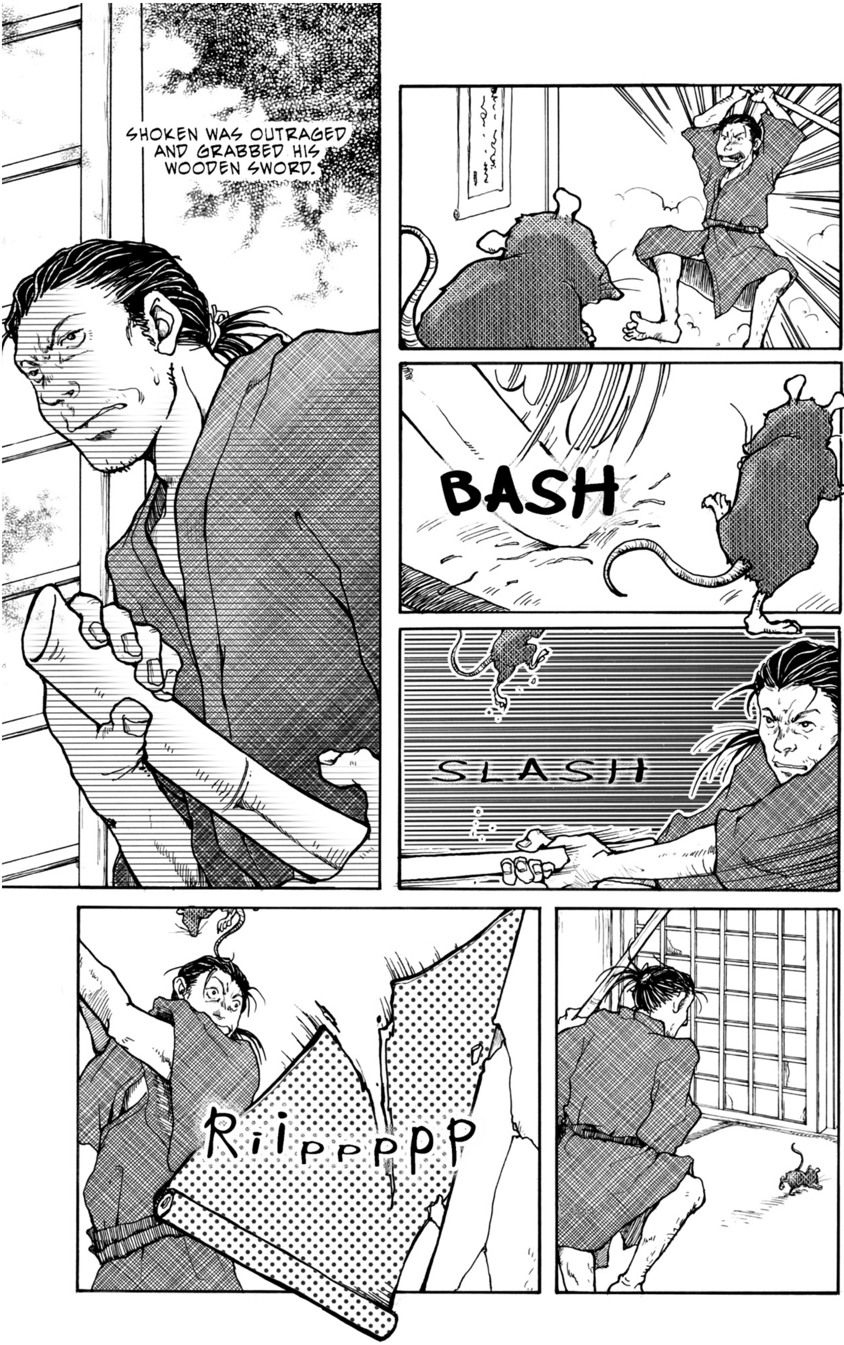

LONG AGO, A MERCHANT MADE A REQUEST TO THE GOVERNOR OF HIS PROVINCE:
IF YOU DECLARE THAT I AM THE SOLE SUPPLIER OF SALT IN YOUR DOMAIN, I'LL GIVE YOU A COMMISSION OF FIVE HUNDRED SILVER COINS.
YOU LOWLIFE MERCHANT!
IF I TOLD THE PEOPLE TO BUY SALT FROM YOU ALONE AT A HIGH PRICE, I MIGHT RECEIVE A COMMISION OF FIVE HUNDRED SILVER COINS, BUT YOU WOULD MAKE A PROFIT OF FIVE THOUSAND.
WHAT KIND OF THING WOULD IT BE TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE PEOPLE AND THEN SHARE A PROFIT WITH A MERCHANT!
DON'T LET MEN LIKE THAT IN HERE AGAIN.

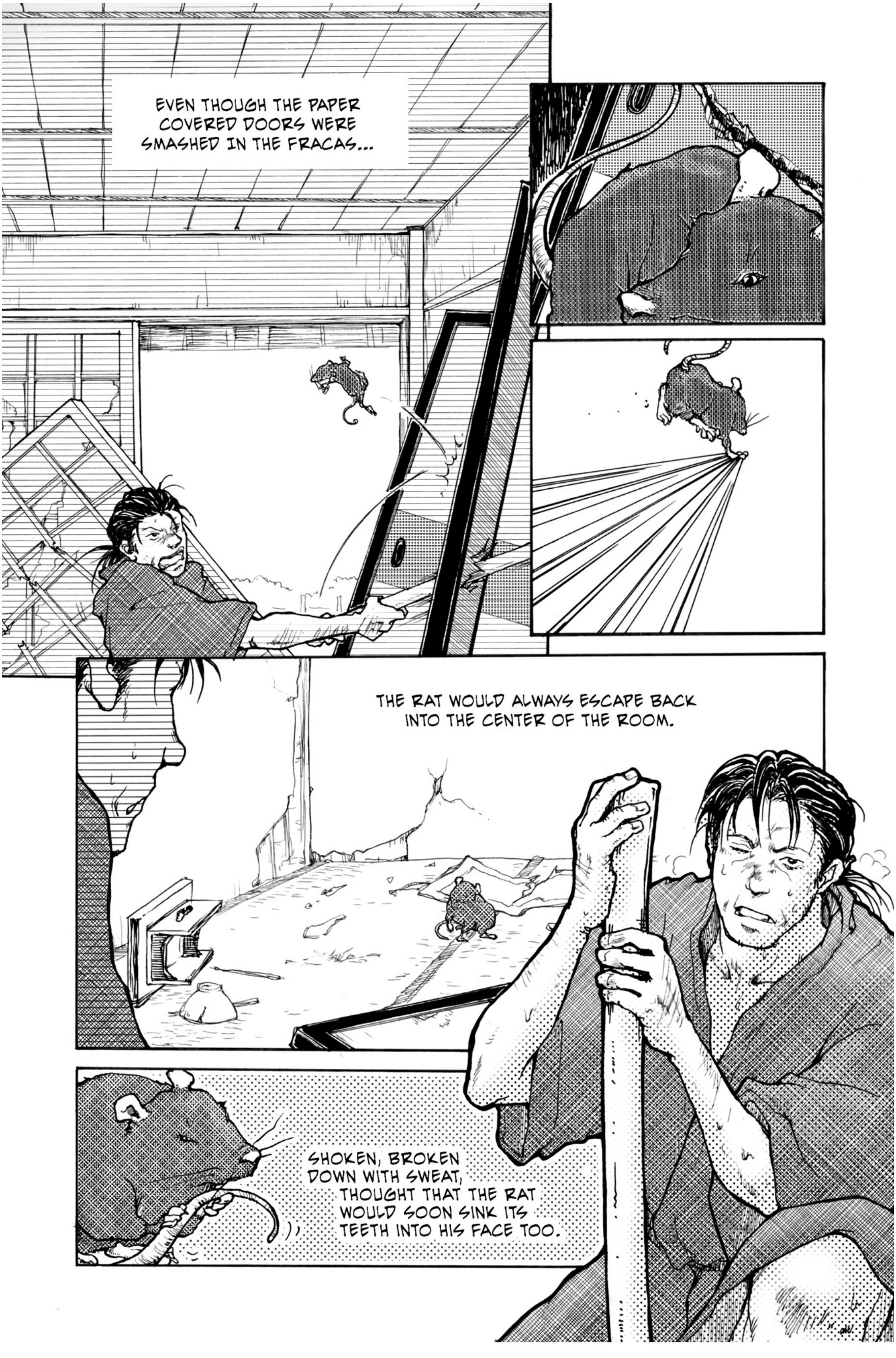

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE GODS POSSESS AN UNFATHOMABLE DIVINE VIRTUE. THEY WILL ONLY BE IMPRESSED AT YOUR ABSOLUTE SINCERITY.
WHY SHOULD THEY AID THE PERVERSITY CREATED BY YOUR OWN SELFISH MIND?

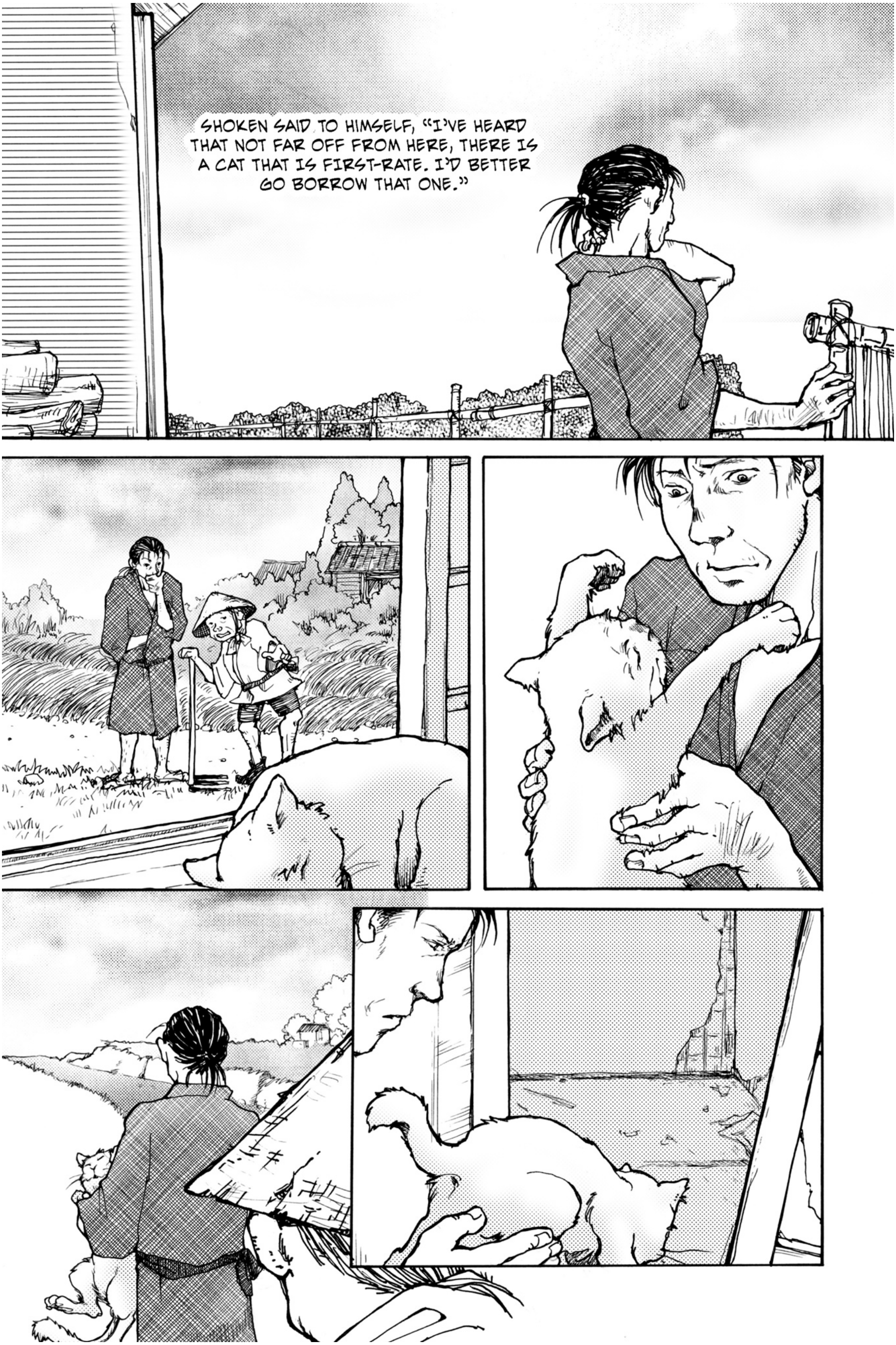
THE MYSTERIOUS TECHNIQUE OF THE CAT

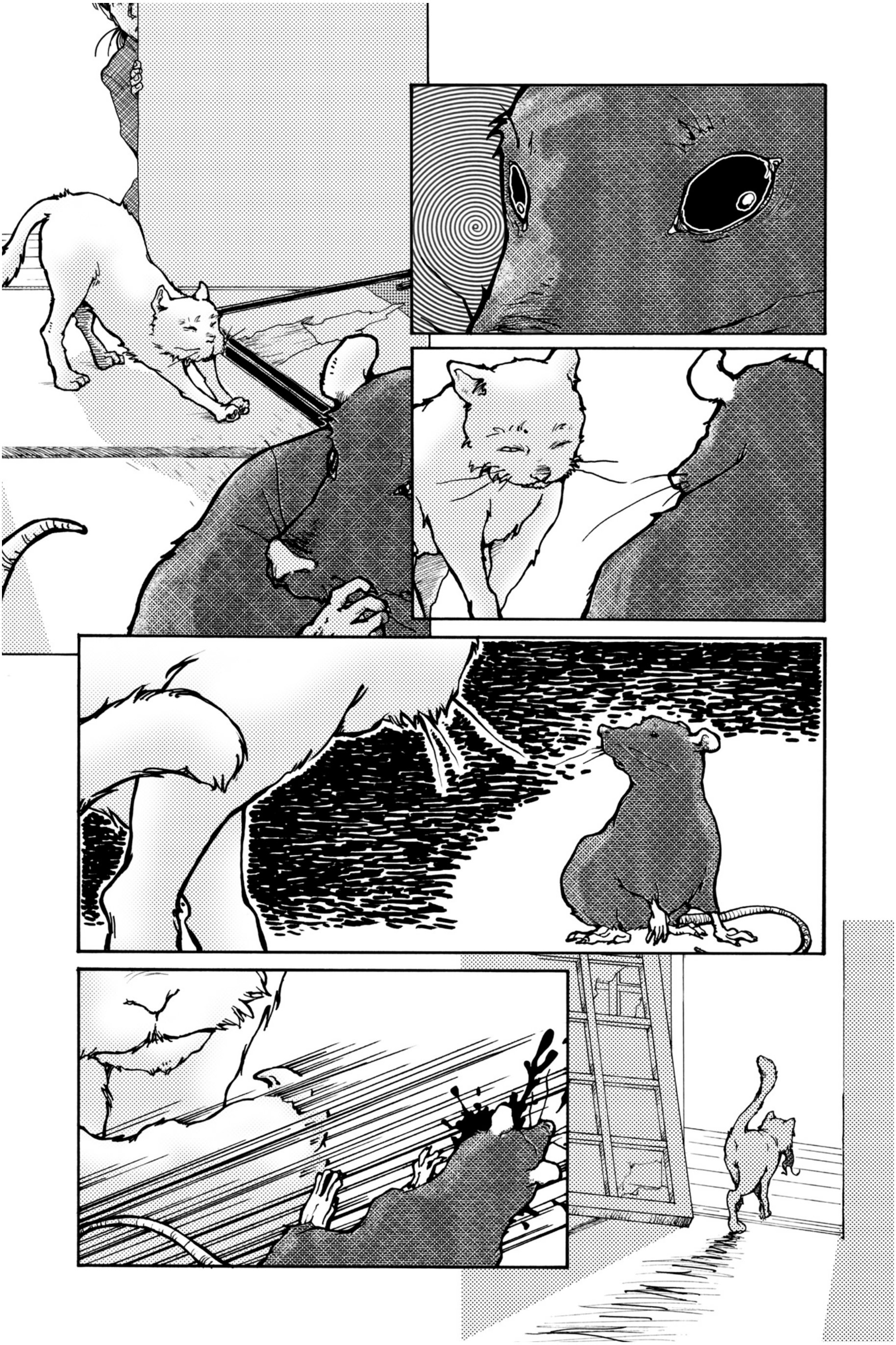

THERE WAS A SWORDSMAN BY THE NAME OF SHOKEN.
ONE DAY, A LARGE RAT TURNED UP IN HIS HOUSE. THE RAT WOULD NOT LEAVE, AND TOOK TO ROAMING AROUND THE HOUSE.
EVENTUALLY SHOKEN MANAGED TO TRAP THE RAT IN A ROOM, SO HE COULD SET HIS CAT ON IT.
BUT AS IT ENTERED THE ROOM, THE RAT ADVANCED TOWARDS IT.
AND HURLED ITSELF UPON THE CAT'S FACE!
SCREEOOOAAA!!!

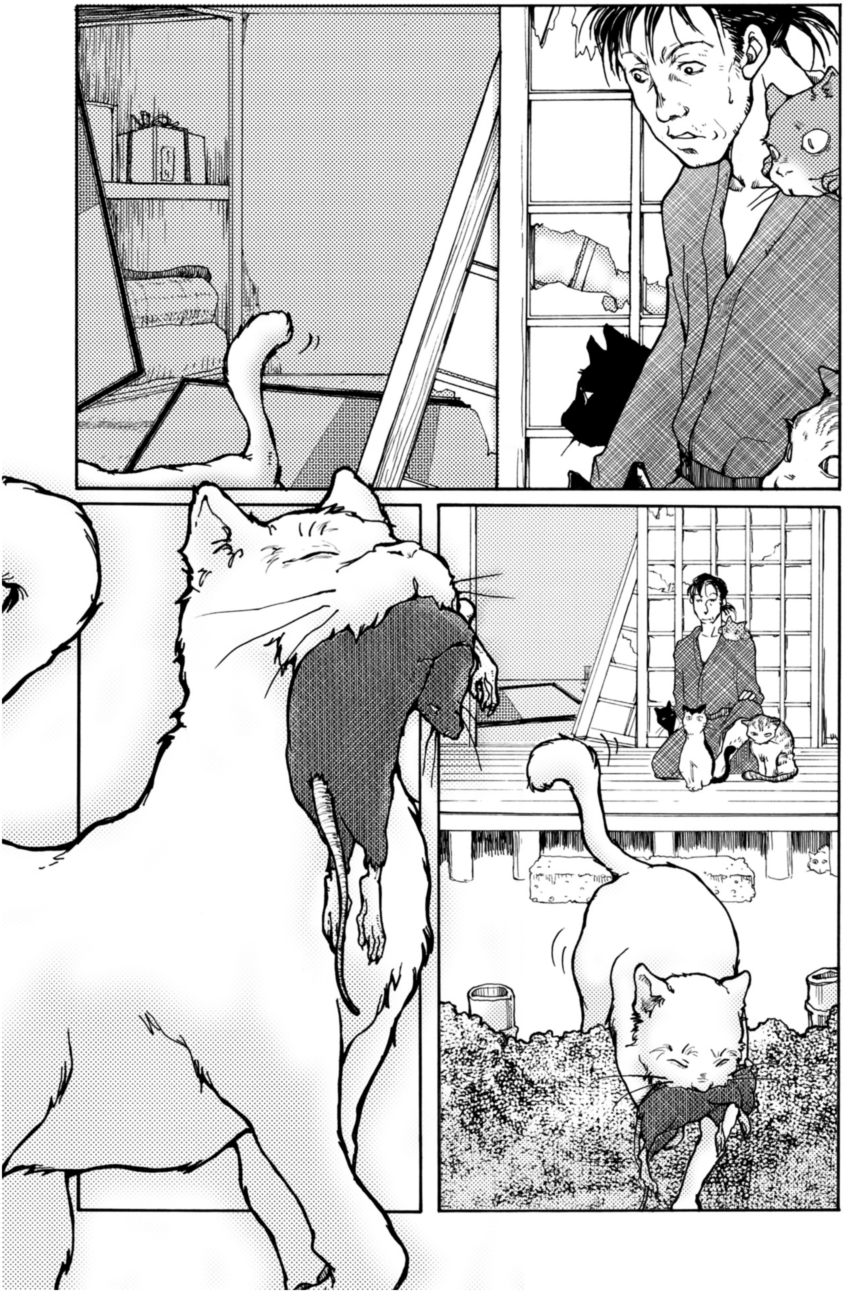

REALIZING HE WAS UP AGAINST MORE THAN HE HAD BARGAINED FOR, SHOKEN WENT AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD BORROWING A NUMBER OF CATS THAT HAD MADE NAMES FOR THEMSELVES AS THE BEST OF THEIR KIND.
BUT WHEN ONE OF THE CATS APPROACHED THE RAT...
THE OTHER CATS ALL FLED IN FEAR...
waaaooeeeee!!

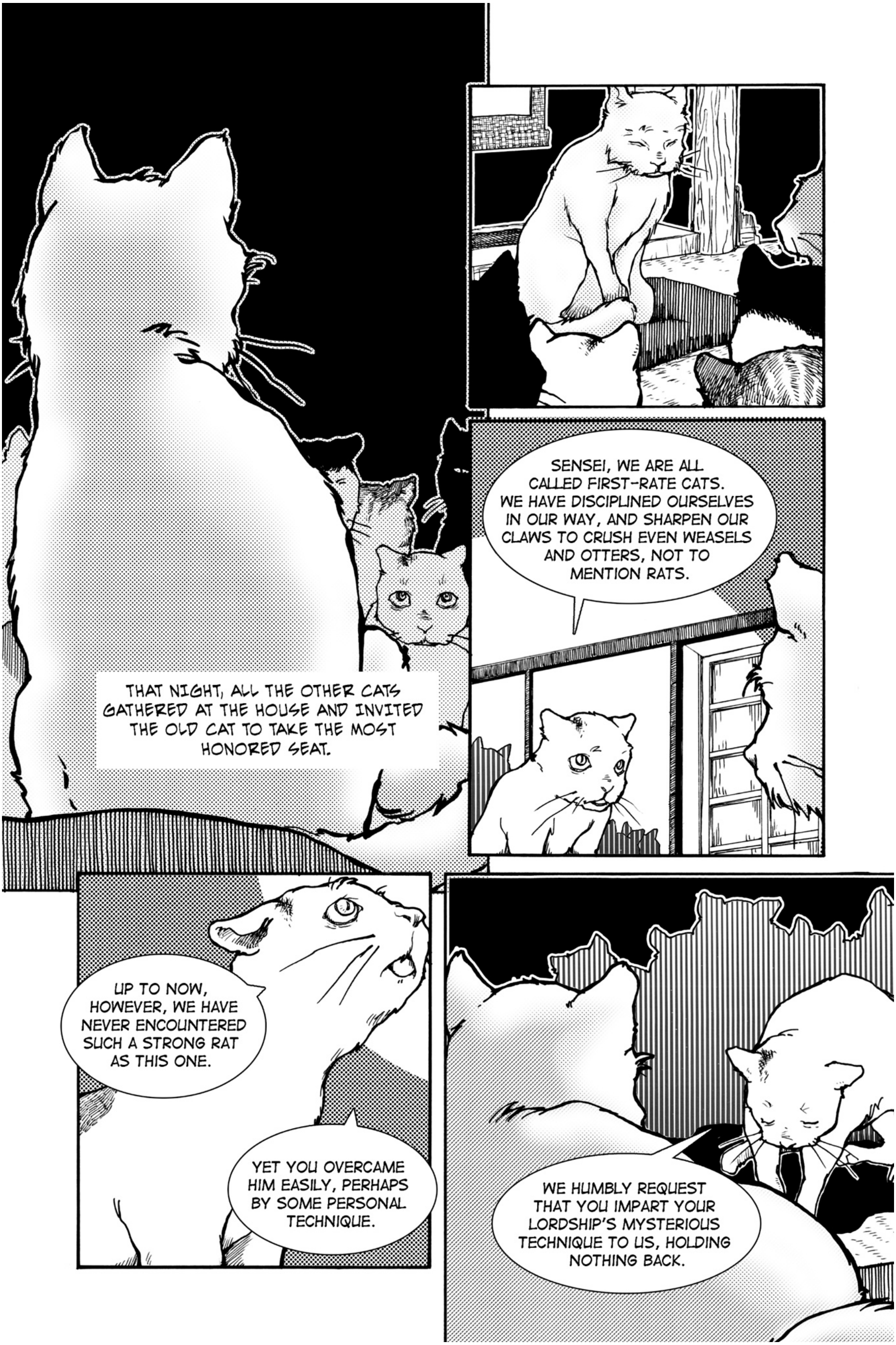

SHOKEN WAS OUTRAGED AND GRABBED HIS WOODEN SWORD.
BASH
SLASH
Riippppp

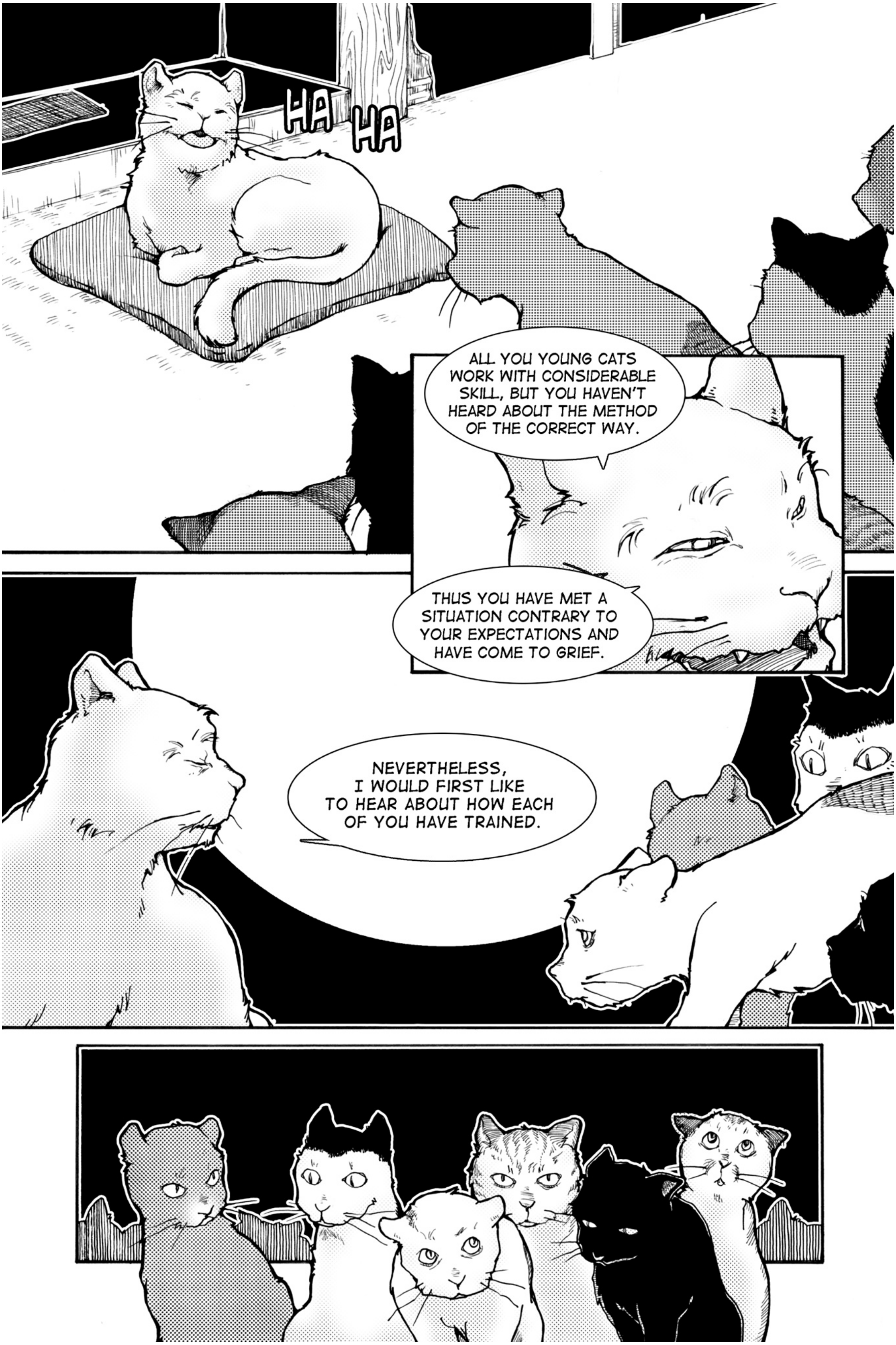

EVEN THOUGH THE PAPER COVERED DOORS WERE SMASHED IN THE FRACAS...
THE RAT WOULD ALWAYS ESCAPE BACK INTO THE CENTER OF THE ROOM.
SHOKEN, BROKEN DOWN WITH SWEAT, THOUGHT THAT THE RAT WOULD SOON SINK ITS TEETH INTO HIS FACE TOO.

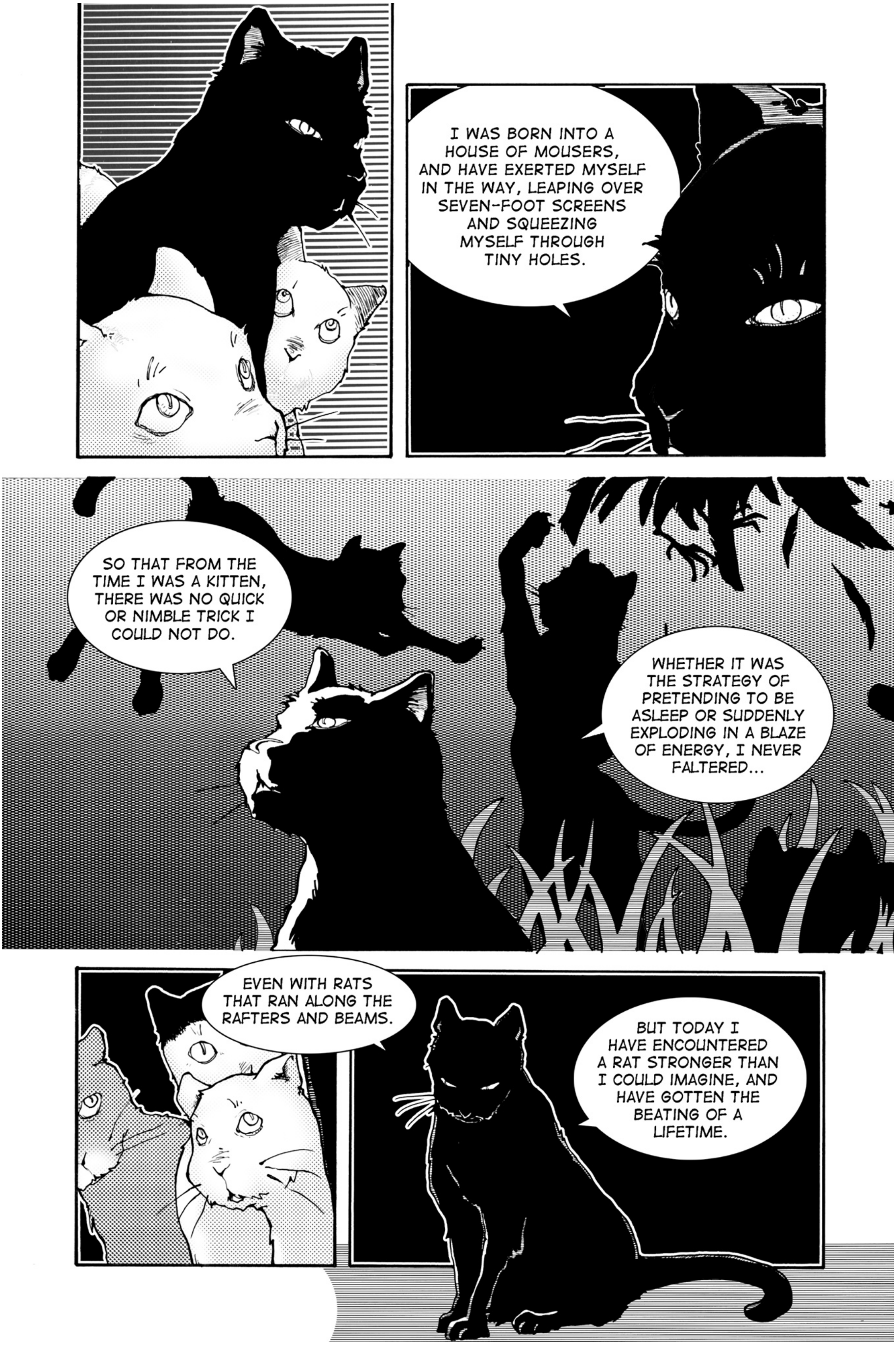

SHOKEN SAID TO HIMSELF, “I’VE HEARD THAT NOT FAR OFF FROM HERE, THERE IS A CAT THAT IS FIRST-RATE. I’D BETTER GO BORROW THAT ONE.”

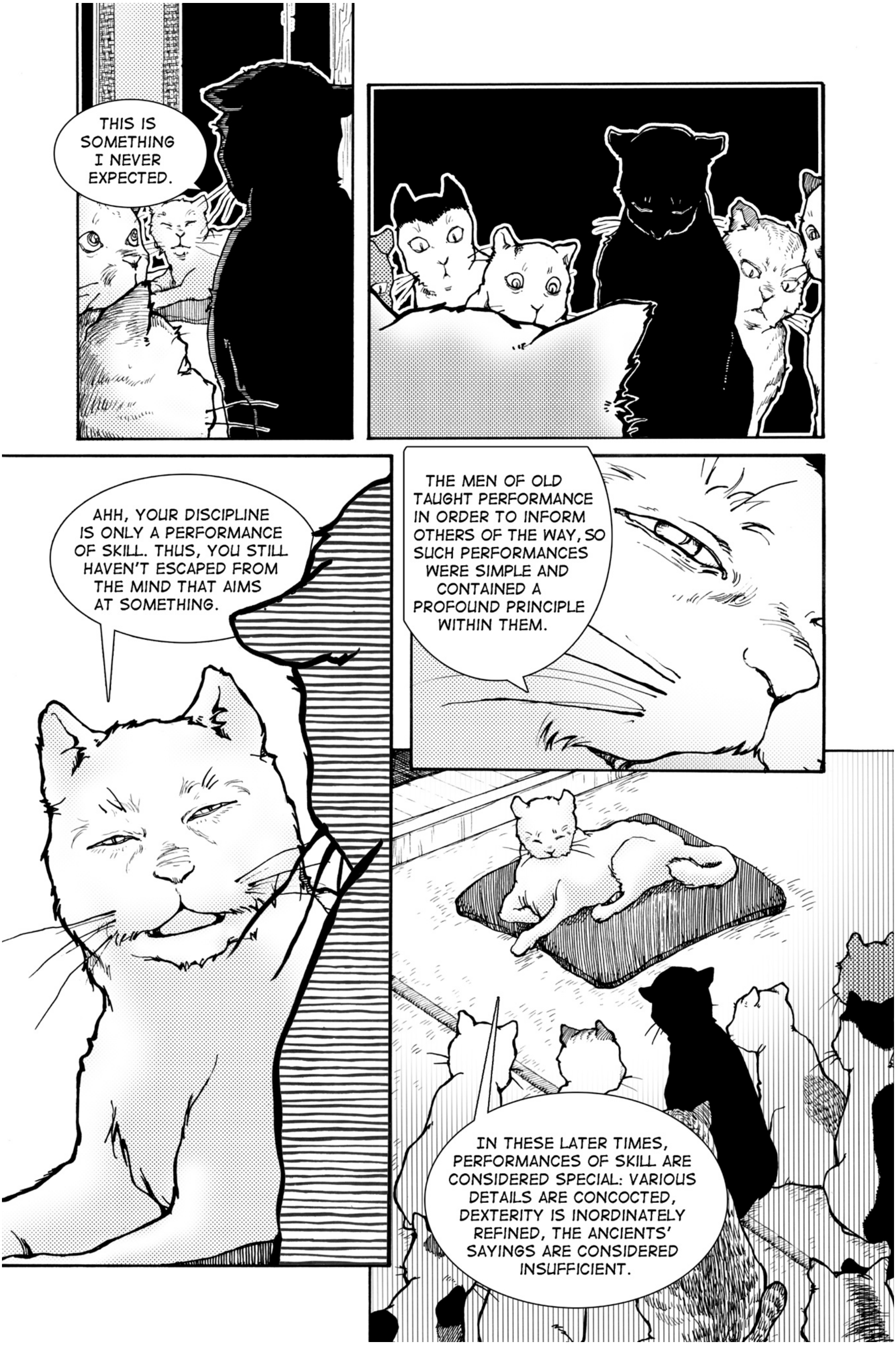


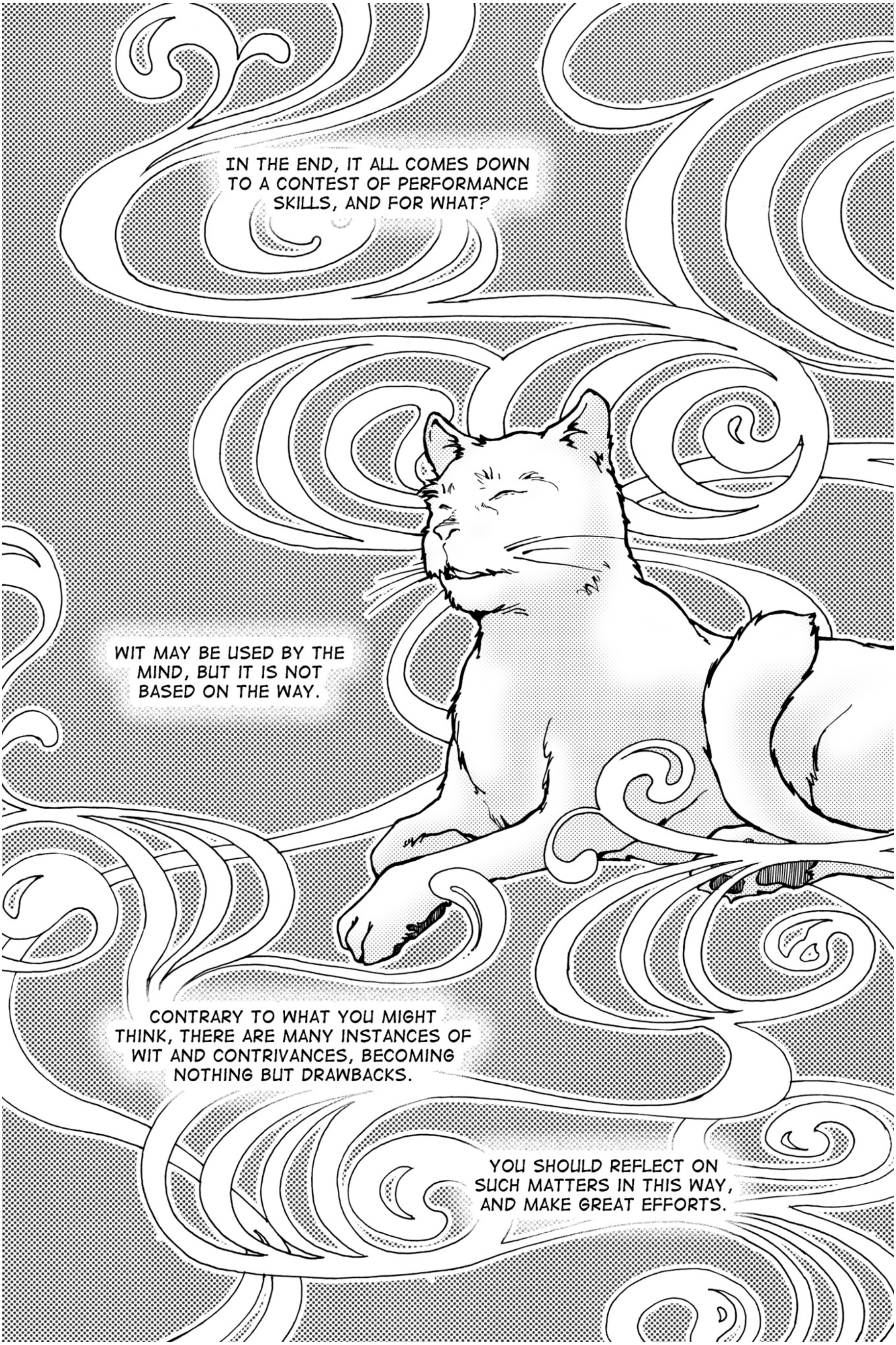


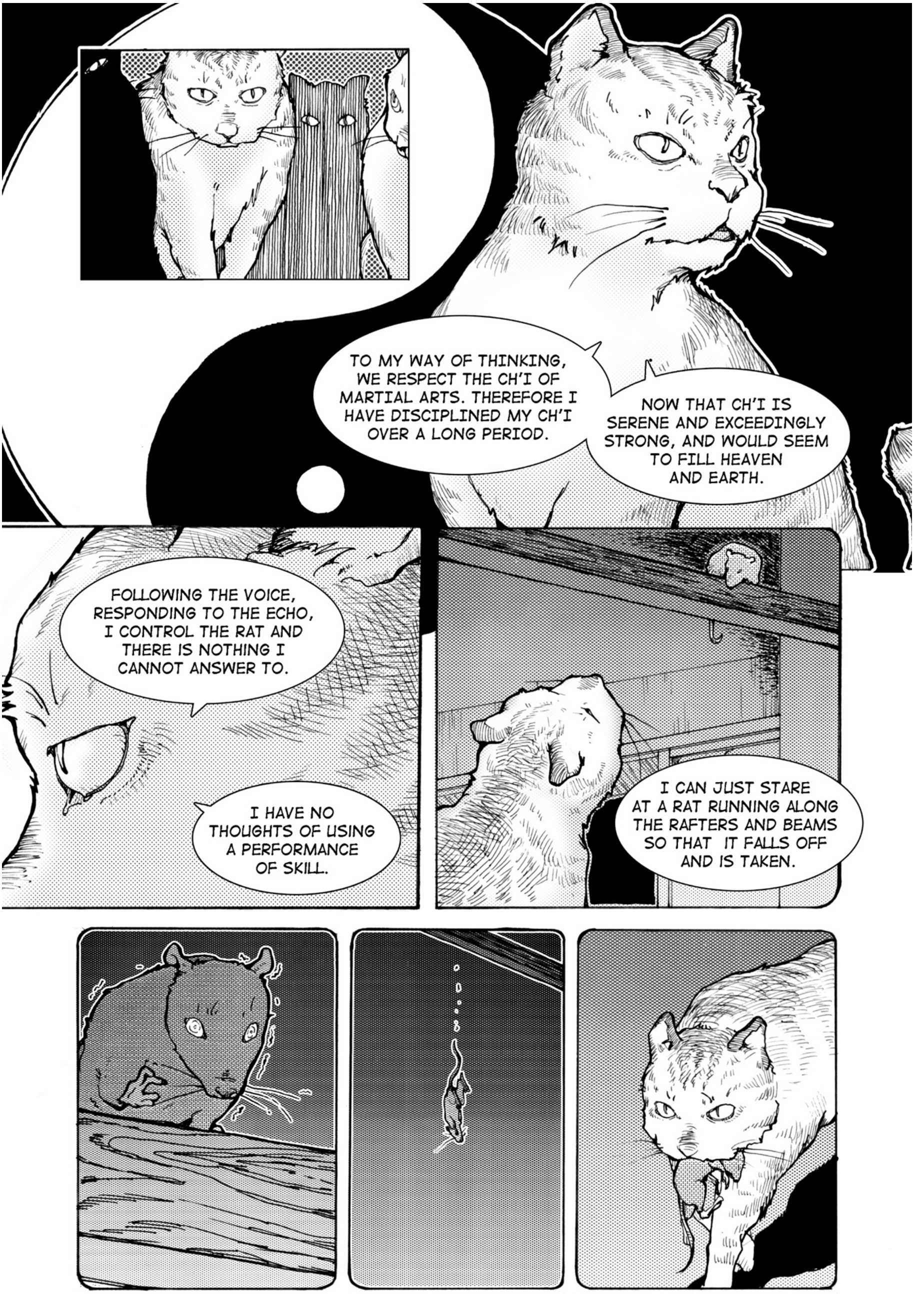

THAT NIGHT, ALL THE OTHER CATS GATHERED AT THE HOUSE AND INVITED THE OLD CAT TO TAKE THE MOST HONORED SEAT.
SENSEI, WE ARE ALL CALLED FIRST-RATE CATS. WE HAVE DISCIPLINED OURSELVES IN OUR WAY, AND SHARPEN OUR CLAWS TO CRUSH EVEN WEASELS AND OTTERS, NOT TO MENTION RATS.
UP TO NOW, HOWEVER, WE HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED SUCH A STRONG RAT AS THIS ONE.
YET YOU OVERCAME HIM EASILY, PERHAPS BY SOME PERSONAL TECHNIQUE.
WE HUMBLY REQUEST THAT YOU IMPART YOUR LORDSHIP'S MYSTERIOUS TECHNIQUE TO US, HOLDING NOTHING BACK.

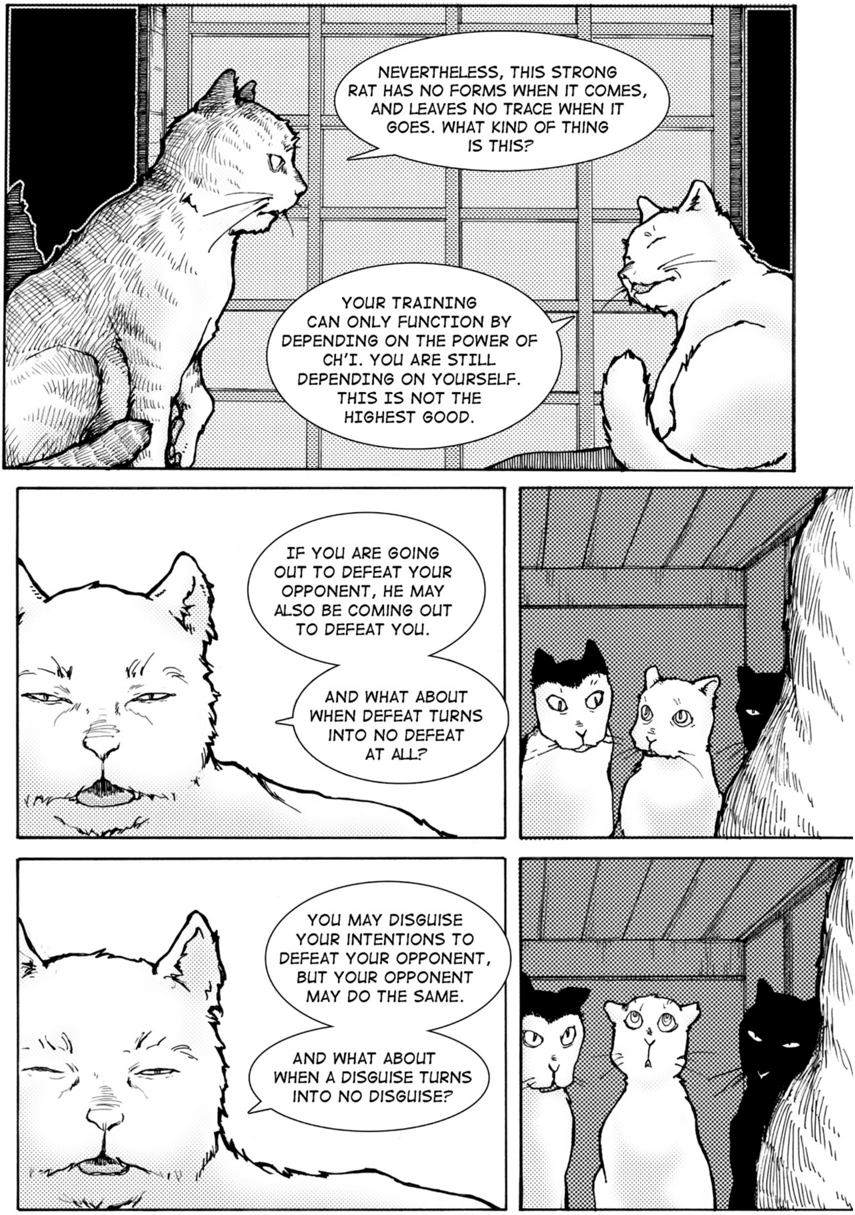

HA HA
ALL YOU YOUNG CATS WORK WITH CONSIDERABLE SKILL, BUT YOU HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT THE METHOD OF THE CORRECT WAY.
THUS YOU HAVE MET A SITUATION CONTRARY TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND HAVE COME TO GRIEF.
NEVERTHELESS, I WOULD FIRST LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT HOW EACH OF YOU HAVE TRAINED.

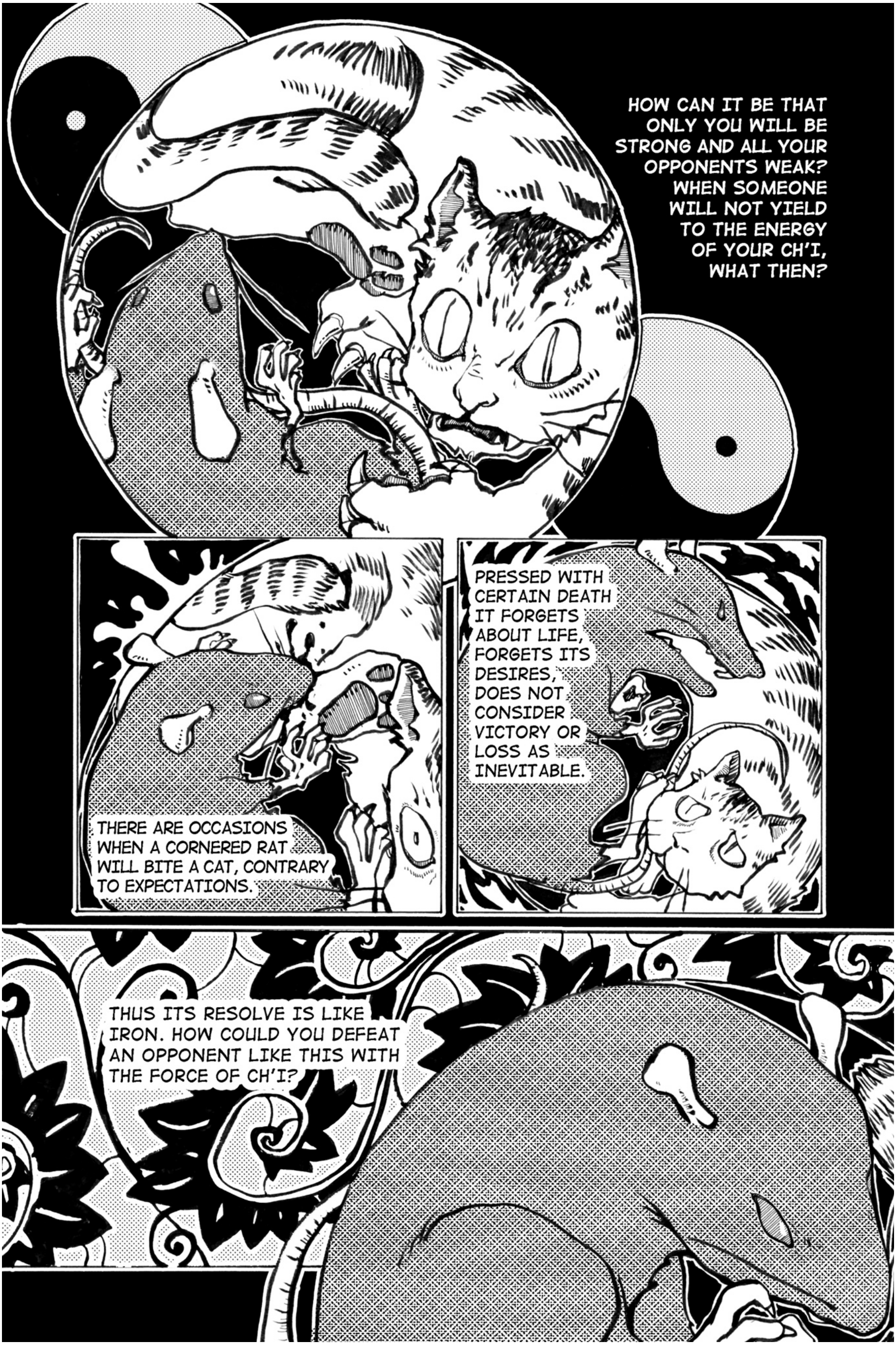

I WAS BORN INTO A HOUSE OF MOUSERS, AND HAVE EXERTED MYSELF IN THE WAY, LEAPING OVER SEVEN-FOOT SCREENS AND SQUEEZING MYSELF THROUGH TINY HOLES.
SO THAT FROM THE TIME I WAS A KITTEN, THERE WAS NO QUICK OR NIMBLE TRICK I COULD NOT DO.
WHETHER IT WAS THE STRATEGY OF PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP OR SUDDENLY EXPLODING IN A BLAZE OF ENERGY, I NEVER FALTERED...
EVEN WITH RATS THAT RAN ALONG THE RAFTERS AND BEAMS.
BUT TODAY I HAVE ENCOUNTERED A RAT STRONGER THAN I COULD IMAGINE, AND HAVE GOTTEN THE BEATING OF A LIFETIME.

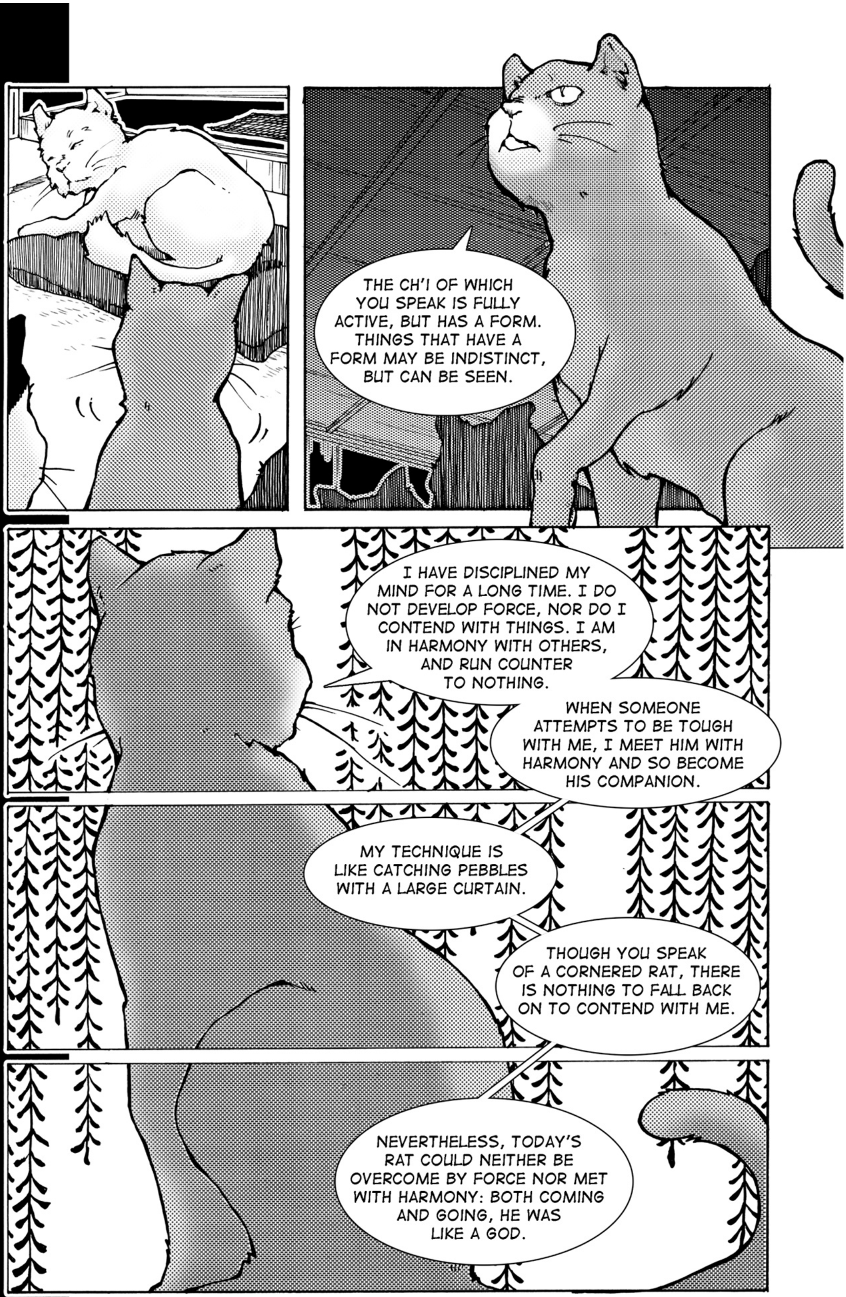

THIS IS SOMETHING I NEVER EXPECTED.
AHH, YOUR DISCIPLINE IS ONLY A PERFORMANCE OF SKILL. THUS, YOU STILL HAVEN'T ESCAPED FROM THE MIND THAT AIMS AT SOMETHING.
THE MEN OF OLD TAUGHT PERFORMANCE IN ORDER TO INFORM OTHERS OF THE WAY, SO SUCH PERFORMANCES WERE SIMPLE AND CONTAINED A PROFOUND PRINCIPLE WITHIN THEM.
IN THESE LATER TIMES, PERFORMANCES OF SKILL ARE CONSIDERED SPECIAL: VARIOUS DETAILS ARE CONCOCTED, DEXTERITY IS INORDINATELY REFINED, THE ANCIENTS' SAYINGS ARE CONSIDERED INSUFFICIENT.

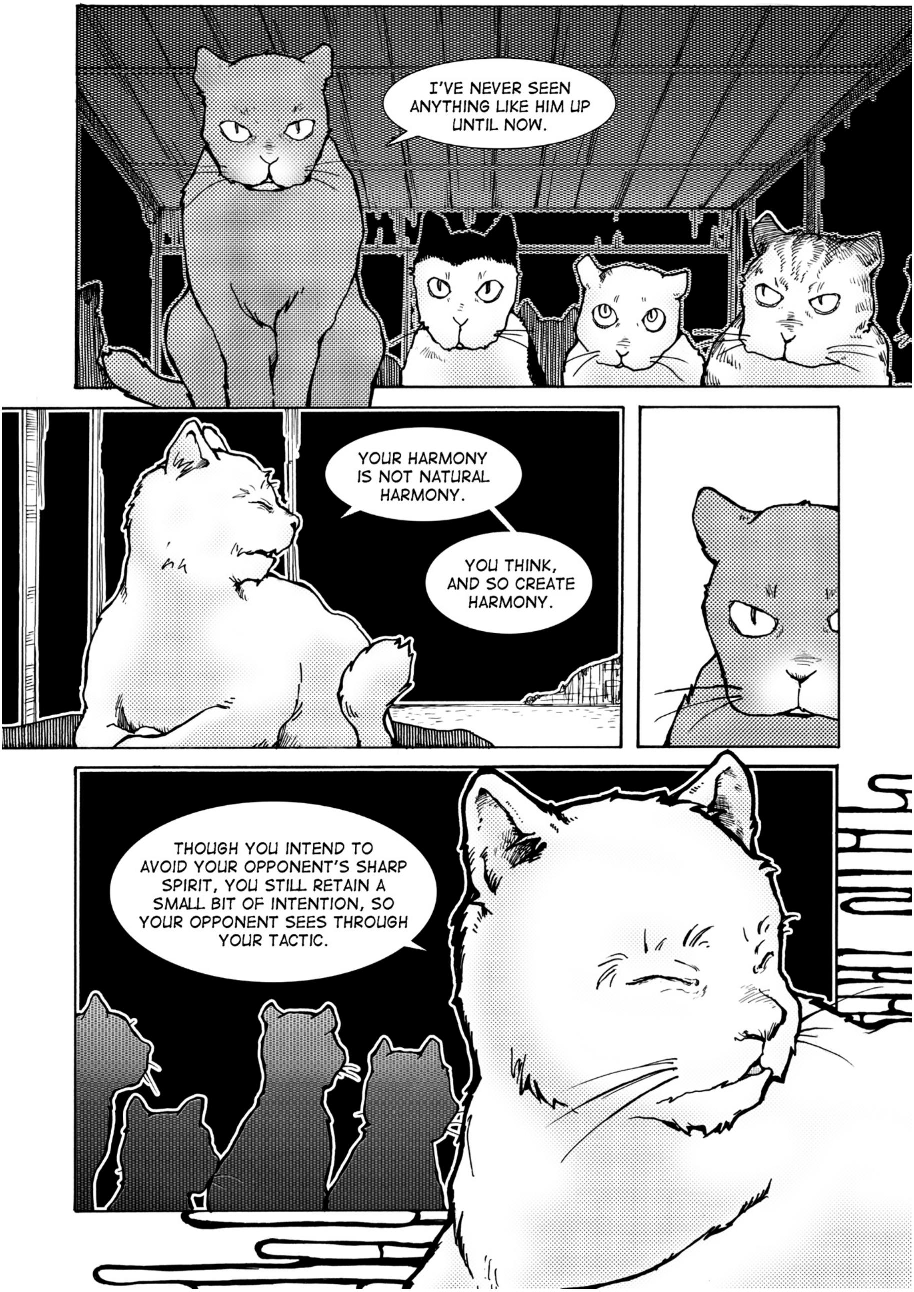

IN THE END, IT ALL COMES DOWN TO A CONTEST OF PERFORMANCE SKILLS, AND FOR WHAT?
WIT MAY BE USED BY THE MIND, BUT IT IS NOT BASED ON THE WAY.
CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK, THERE ARE MANY INSTANCES OF WIT AND CONTRIVANCES, BECOMING NOTHING BUT DRAWBACKS.
YOU SHOULD REFLECT ON SUCH MATTERS IN THIS WAY, AND MAKE GREAT EFFORTS.

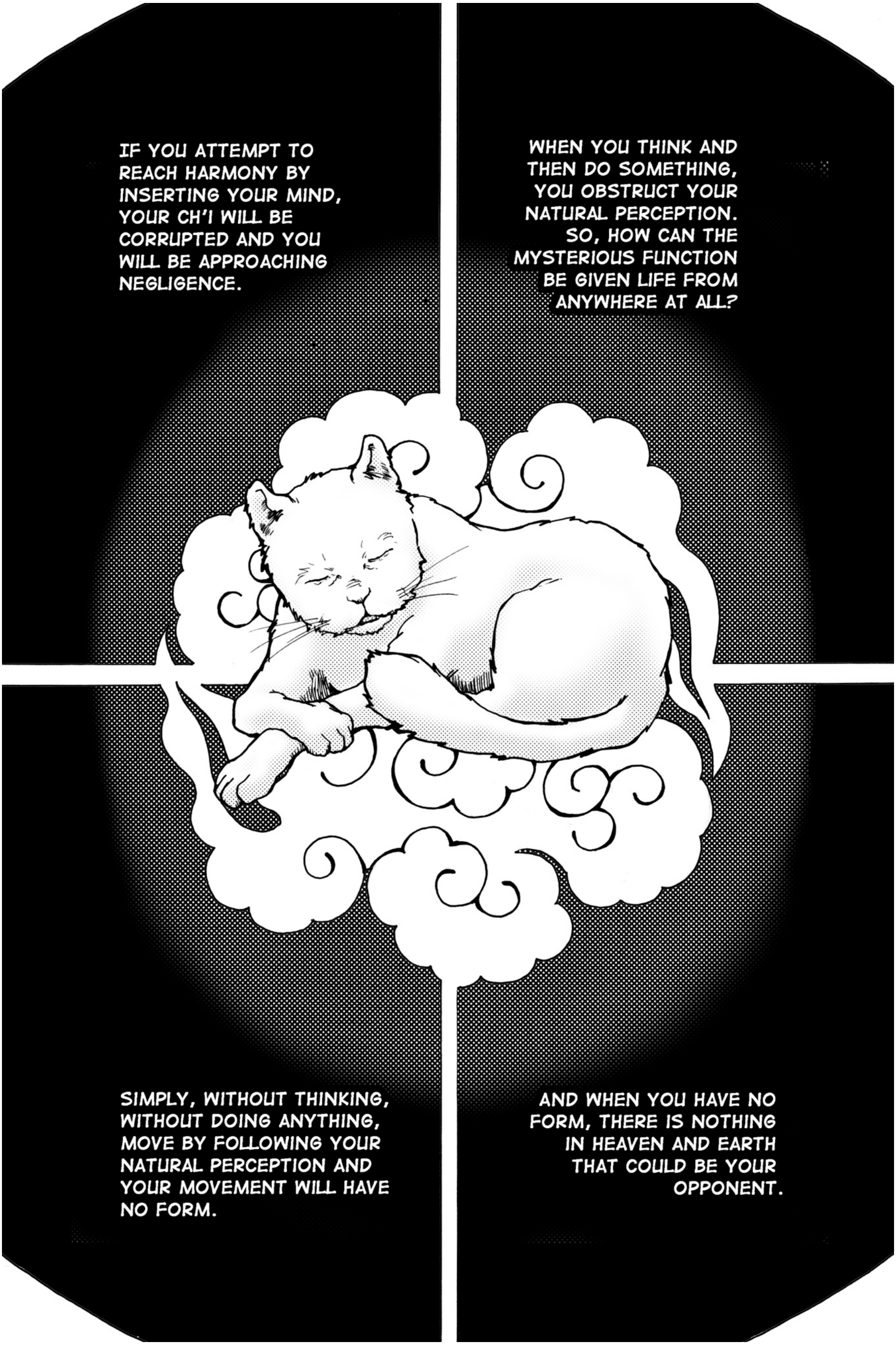

TO MY WAY OF THINKING, WE RESPECT THE CH'I OF MARTIAL ARTS. THEREFORE I HAVE DISCIPLINED MY CH'I OVER A LONG PERIOD.
NOW THAT CH'I IS SERENE AND EXCEEDINGLY STRONG, AND WOULD SEEM TO FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH.
FOLLOWING THE VOICE, RESPONDING TO THE ECHO, I CONTROL THE RAT AND THERE IS NOTHING I CANNOT ANSWER TO.
I HAVE NO THOUGHTS OF USING A PERFORMANCE OF SKILL.
I CAN JUST STARE AT A RAT RUNNING ALONG THE RAFTERS AND BEAMS SO THAT IT FALLS OFF AND IS TAKEN.

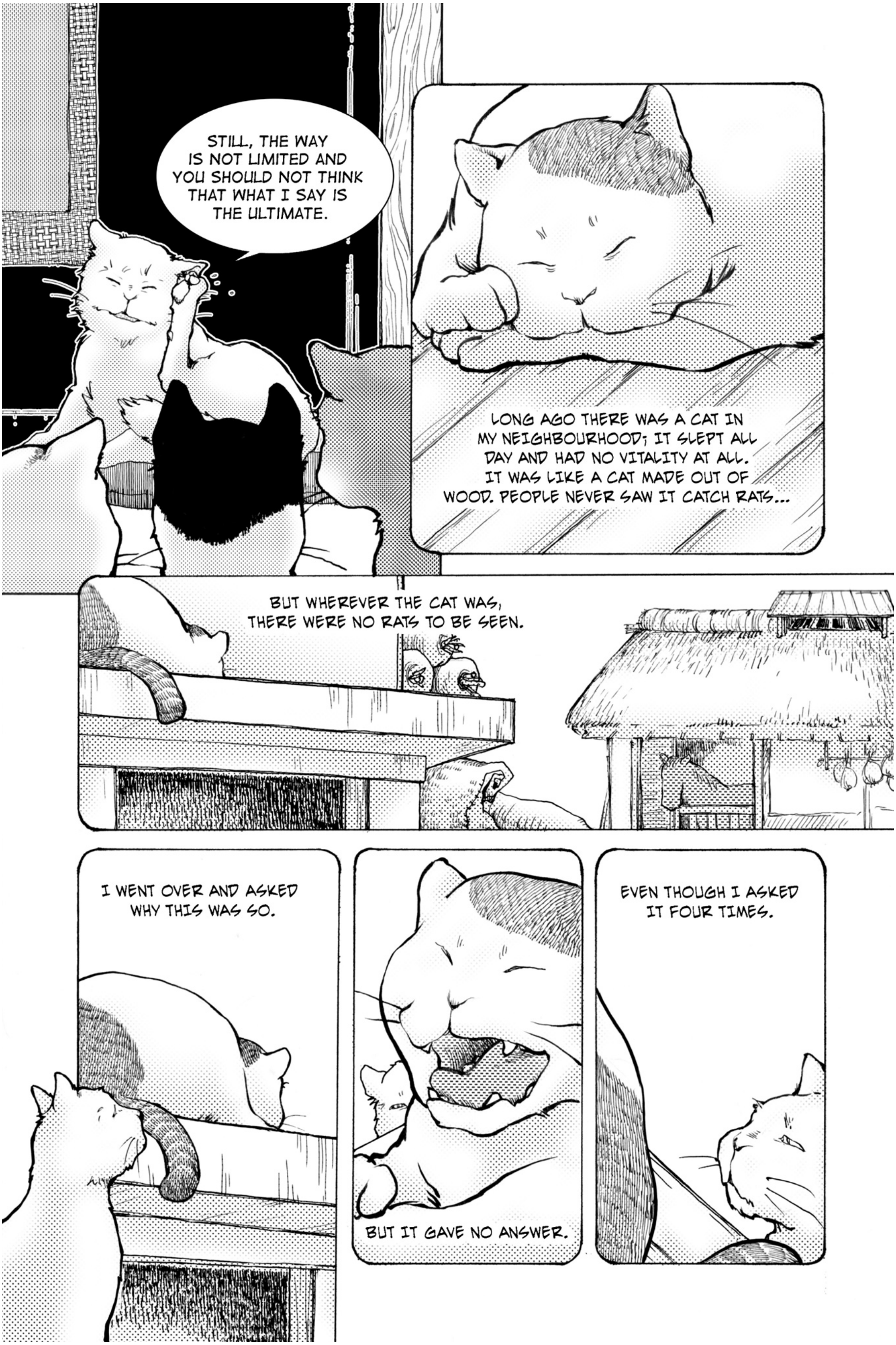

NEVERTHELESS, THIS STRONG RAT HAS NO FORMS WHEN IT COMES, AND LEAVES NO TRACE WHEN IT GOES. WHAT KIND OF THING IS THIS?
YOUR TRAINING CAN ONLY FUNCTION BY DEPENDING ON THE POWER OF CH'I. YOU ARE STILL DEPENDING ON YOURSELF. THIS IS NOT THE HIGHEST GOOD.
IF YOU ARE GOING OUT TO DEFEAT YOUR OPPONENT, HE MAY ALSO BE COMING OUT TO DEFEAT YOU.
AND WHAT ABOUT WHEN DEFEAT TURNS INTO NO DEFEAT AT ALL?
YOU MAY DISGUISE YOUR INTENTIONS TO DEFEAT YOUR OPPONENT, BUT YOUR OPPONENT MAY DO THE SAME.
AND WHAT ABOUT WHEN A DISGUISE TURNS INTO NO DISGUISE?

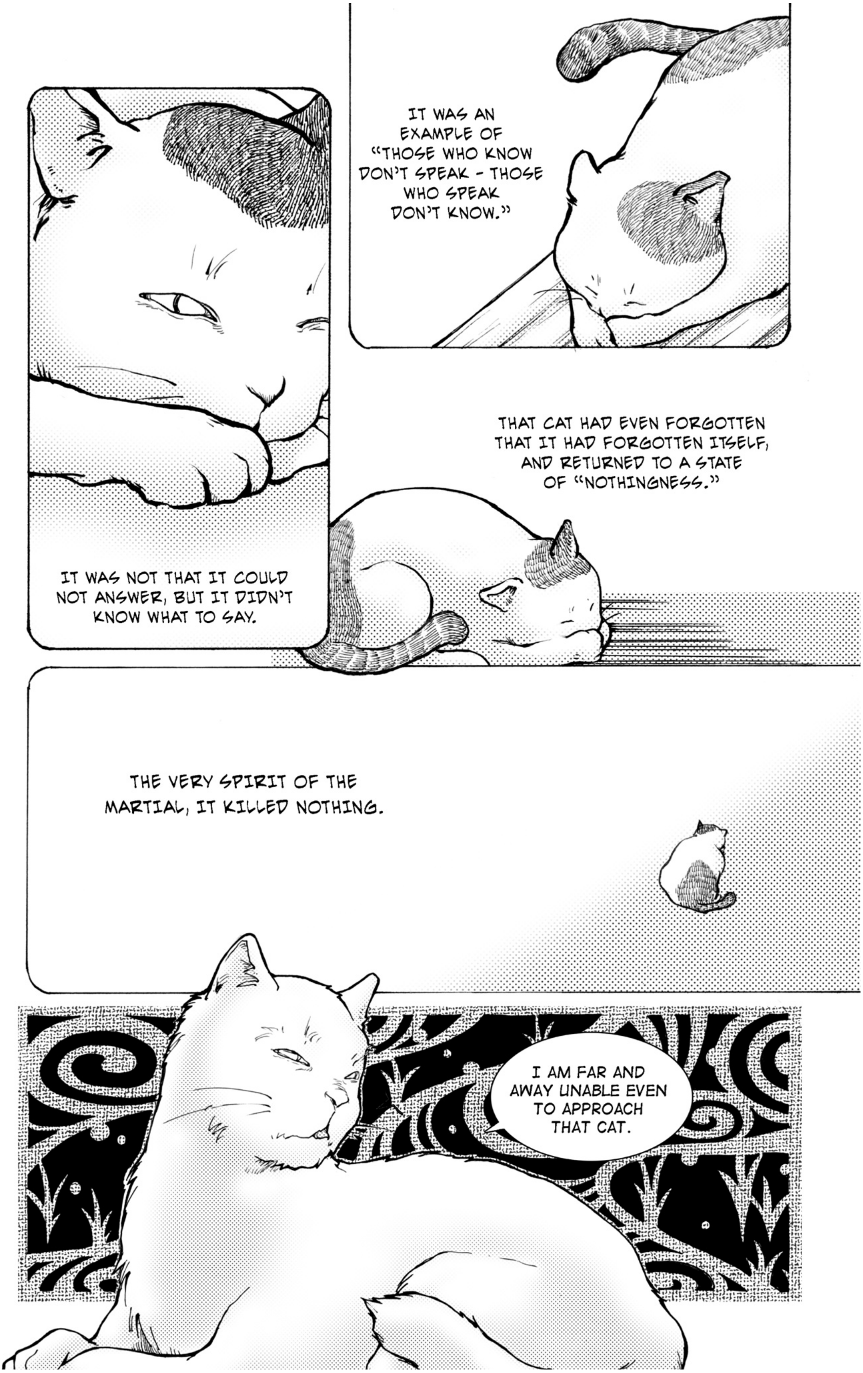

HOW CAN IT BE THAT ONLY YOU WILL BE STRONG AND ALL YOUR OPPONENTS WEAK? WHEN SOMEONE WILL NOT YIELD TO THE ENERGY OF YOUR CH'I, WHAT THEN?
THERE ARE OCCASIONS WHEN A CORNERED RAT WILL BITE A CAT, CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS.
PRESSED WITH CERTAIN DEATH IT FORGETS ABOUT LIFE, FORGETS ITS DESIRES, DOES NOT CONSIDER VICTORY OR LOSS AS INEVITABLE.
THUS ITS RESOLVE IS LIKE IRON. HOW COULD YOU DEFEAT AN OPPONENT LIKE THIS WITH THE FORCE OF CH'I?

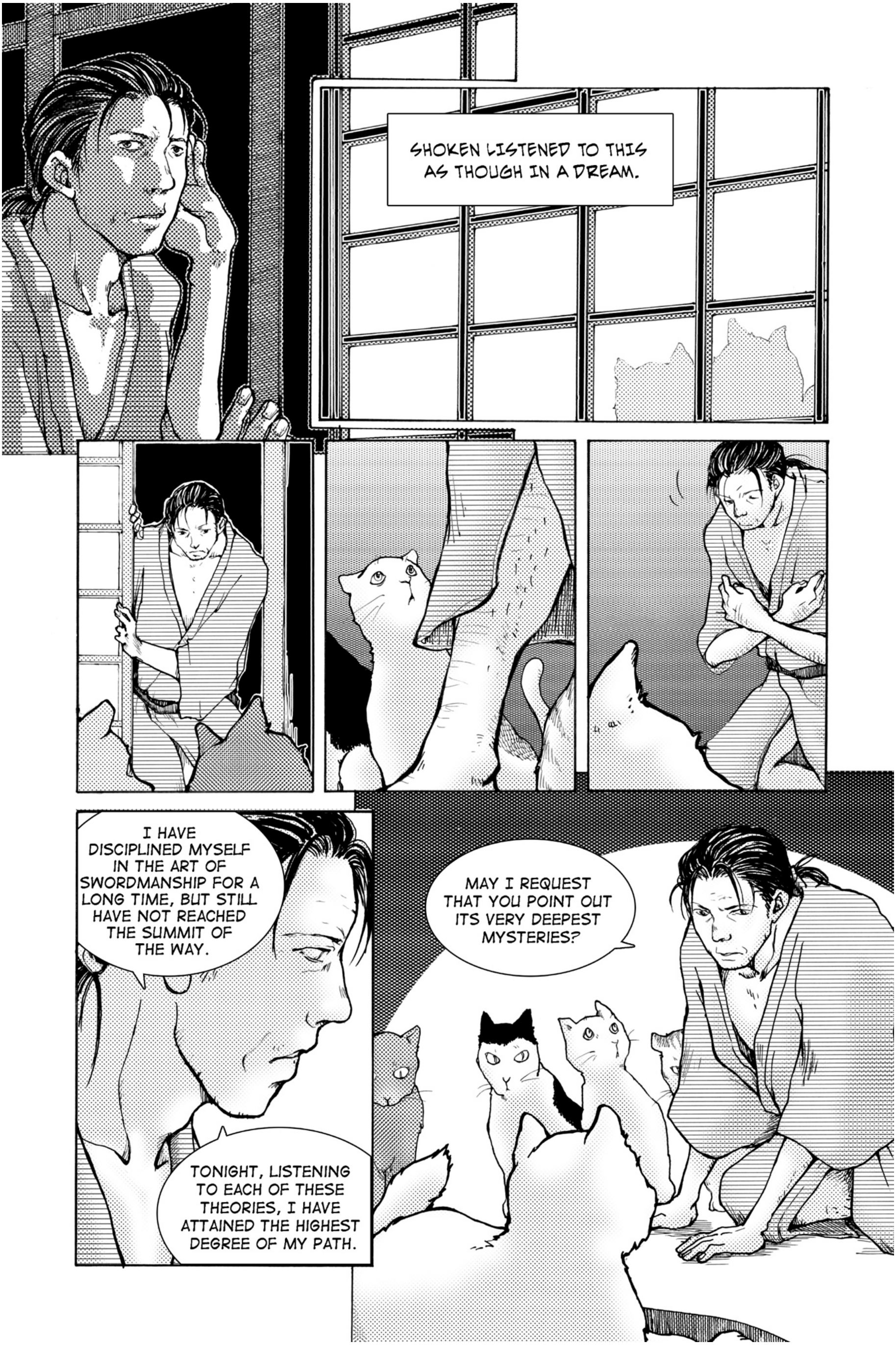

THE CH'I OF WHICH YOU SPEAK IS FULLY ACTIVE, BUT HAS A FORM. THINGS THAT HAVE A FORM MAY BE INDISTINCT, BUT CAN BE SEEN.
I HAVE DISCIPLINED MY MIND FOR A LONG TIME. I DO NOT DEVELOP FORCE, NOR DO I CONTEND WITH THINGS. I AM IN HARMONY WITH OTHERS, AND RUN COUNTER TO NOTHING.
WHEN SOMEONE ATTEMPTS TO BE TOUGH WITH ME, I MEET HIM WITH HARMONY AND SO BECOME HIS COMPANION.
MY TECHNIQUE IS LIKE CATCHING PEBBLES WITH A LARGE CURTAIN.
THOUGH YOU SPEAK OF A CORNERED RAT, THERE IS NOTHING TO FALL BACK ON TO CONTEND WITH ME.
NEVERTHELESS, TODAY'S RAT COULD NEITHER BE OVERCOME BY FORCE NOR MET WITH HARMONY: BOTH COMING AND GOING, HE WAS LIKE A GOD.

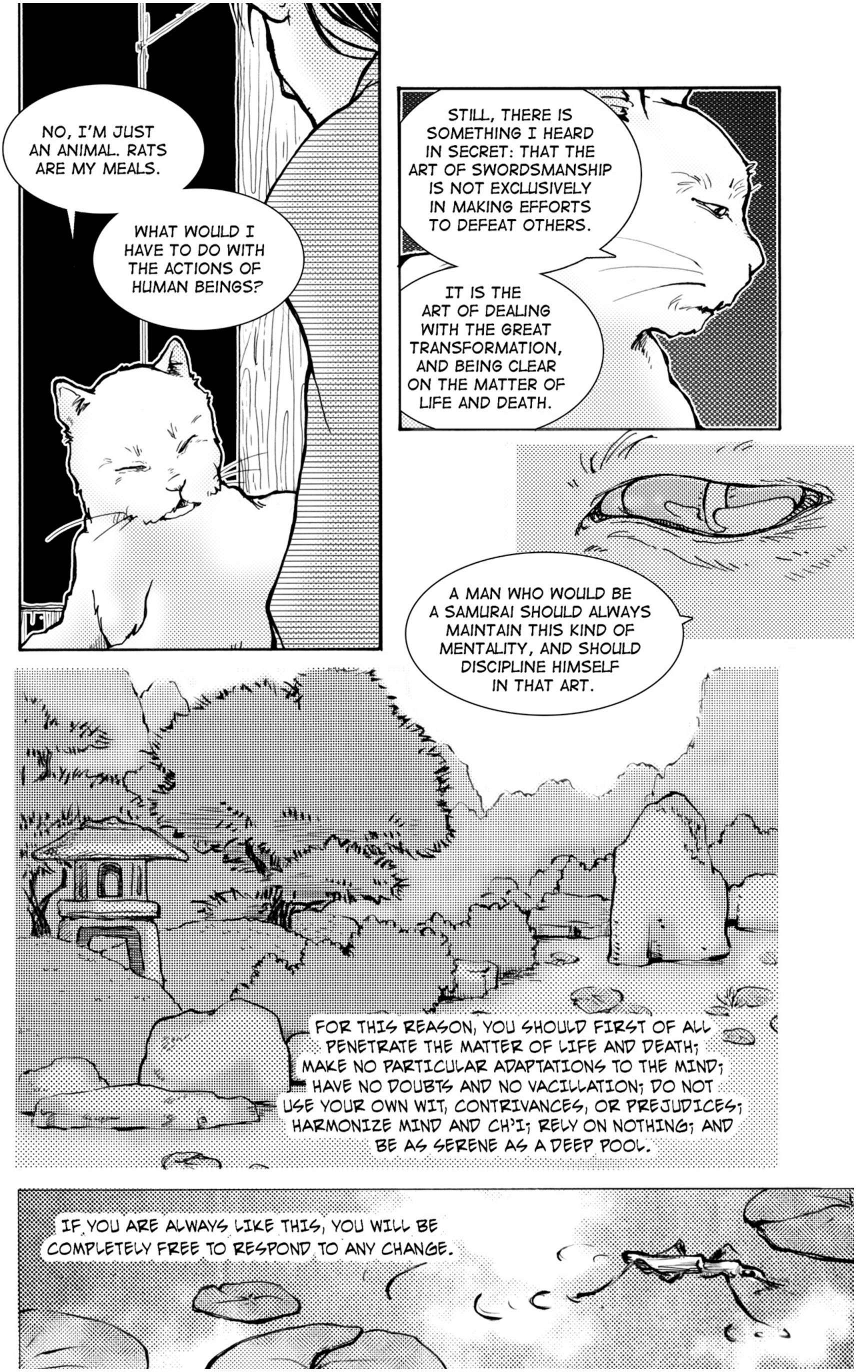

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HIM UP UNTIL NOW.
YOUR HARMONY IS NOT NATURAL HARMONY.
YOU THINK, AND SO CREATE HARMONY.
THOUGH YOU INTEND TO AVOID YOUR OPPONENT'S SHARP SPIRIT, YOU STILL RETAIN A SMALL BIT OF INTENTION, SO YOUR OPPONENT SEES THROUGH YOUR TACTIC.

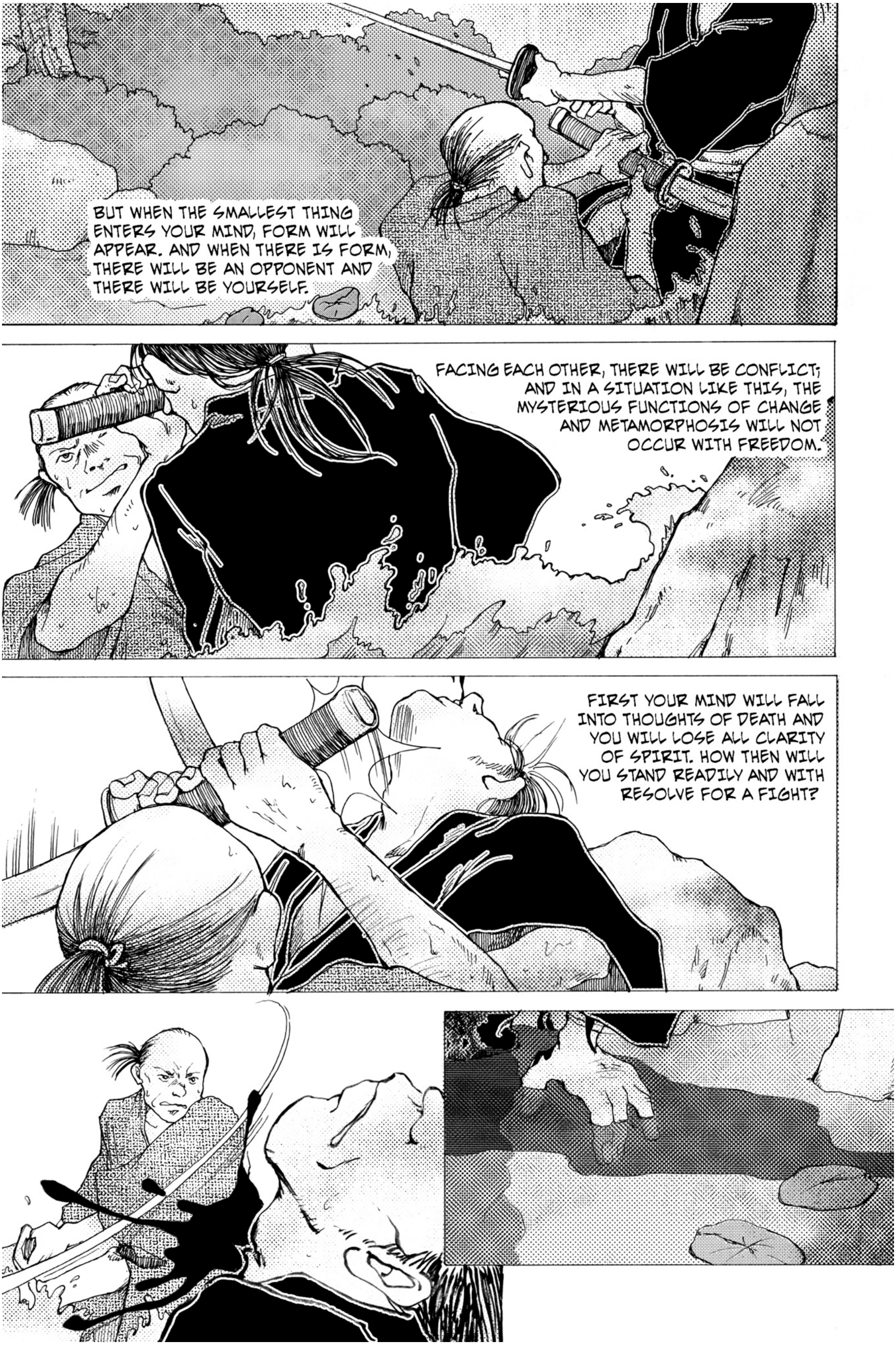

IF YOU ATTEMPT TO REACH HARMONY BY INSERTING YOUR MIND, YOUR CH'I WILL BE CORRUPTED AND YOU WILL BE APPROACHING NEGLIGENCE.
WHEN YOU THINK AND THEN DO SOMETHING, YOU OBSTRUCT YOUR NATURAL PERCEPTION. SO, HOW CAN THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTION BE GIVEN LIFE FROM ANYWHERE AT ALL?
SIMPLY, WITHOUT THINKING, WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING, MOVE BY FOLLOWING YOUR NATURAL PERCEPTION AND YOUR MOVEMENT WILL HAVE NO FORM.
AND WHEN YOU HAVE NO FORM, THERE IS NOTHING IN HEAVEN AND EARTH THAT COULD BE YOUR OPPONENT.

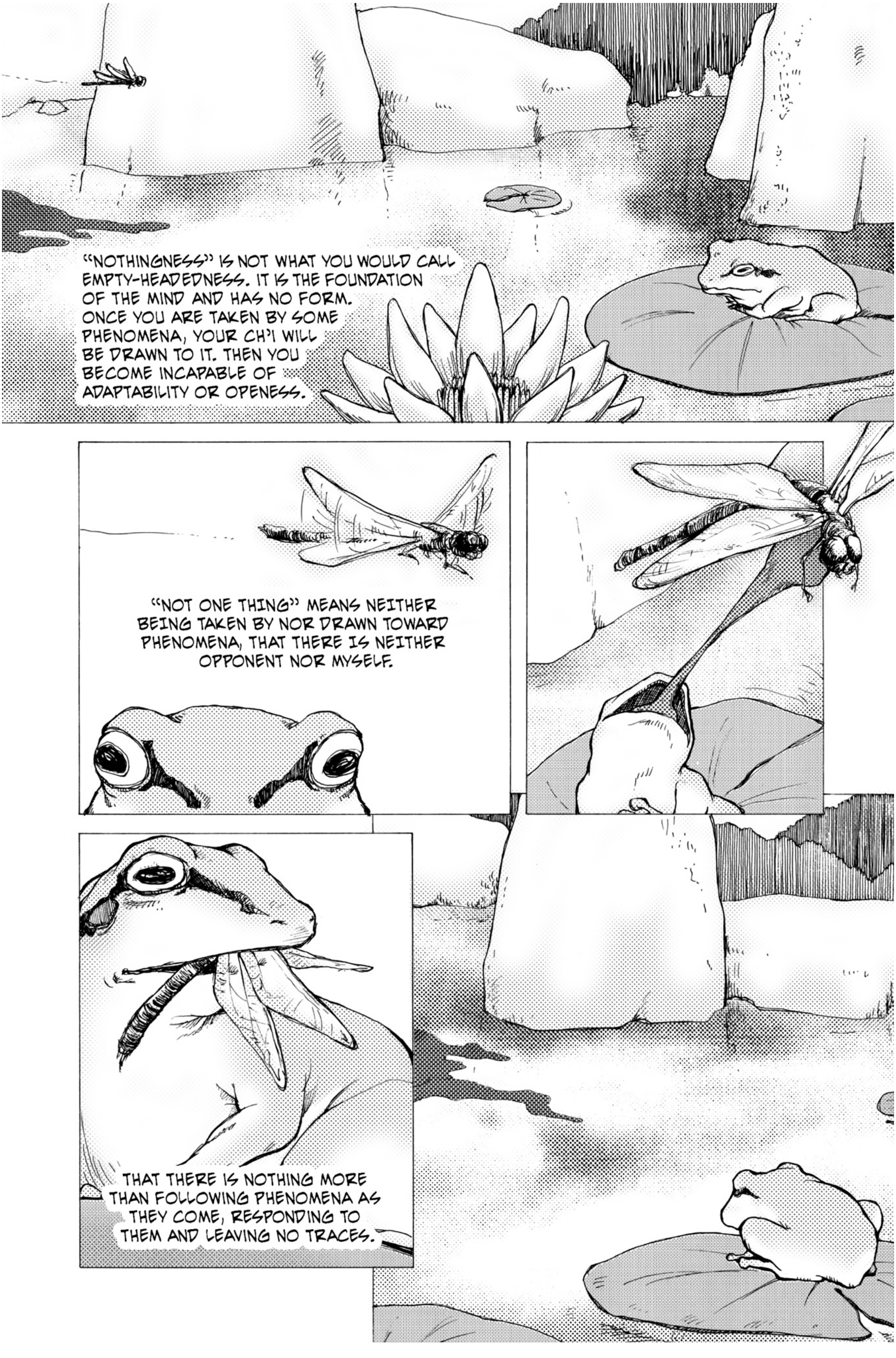

STILL, THE WAY IS NOT LIMITED AND YOU SHOULD NOT THINK THAT WHAT I SAY IS THE ULTIMATE.
LONG AGO THERE WAS A CAT IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD; IT SLEPT ALL DAY AND HAD NO VITALITY AT ALL. IT WAS LIKE A CAT MADE OUT OF WOOD. PEOPLE NEVER SAW IT CATCH RATS...
BUT WHEREVER THE CAT WAS, THERE WERE NO RATS TO BE SEEN.
I WENT OVER AND ASKED WHY THIS WAS SO.
BUT IT GAVE NO ANSWER.
EVEN THOUGH I ASKED IT FOUR TIMES.

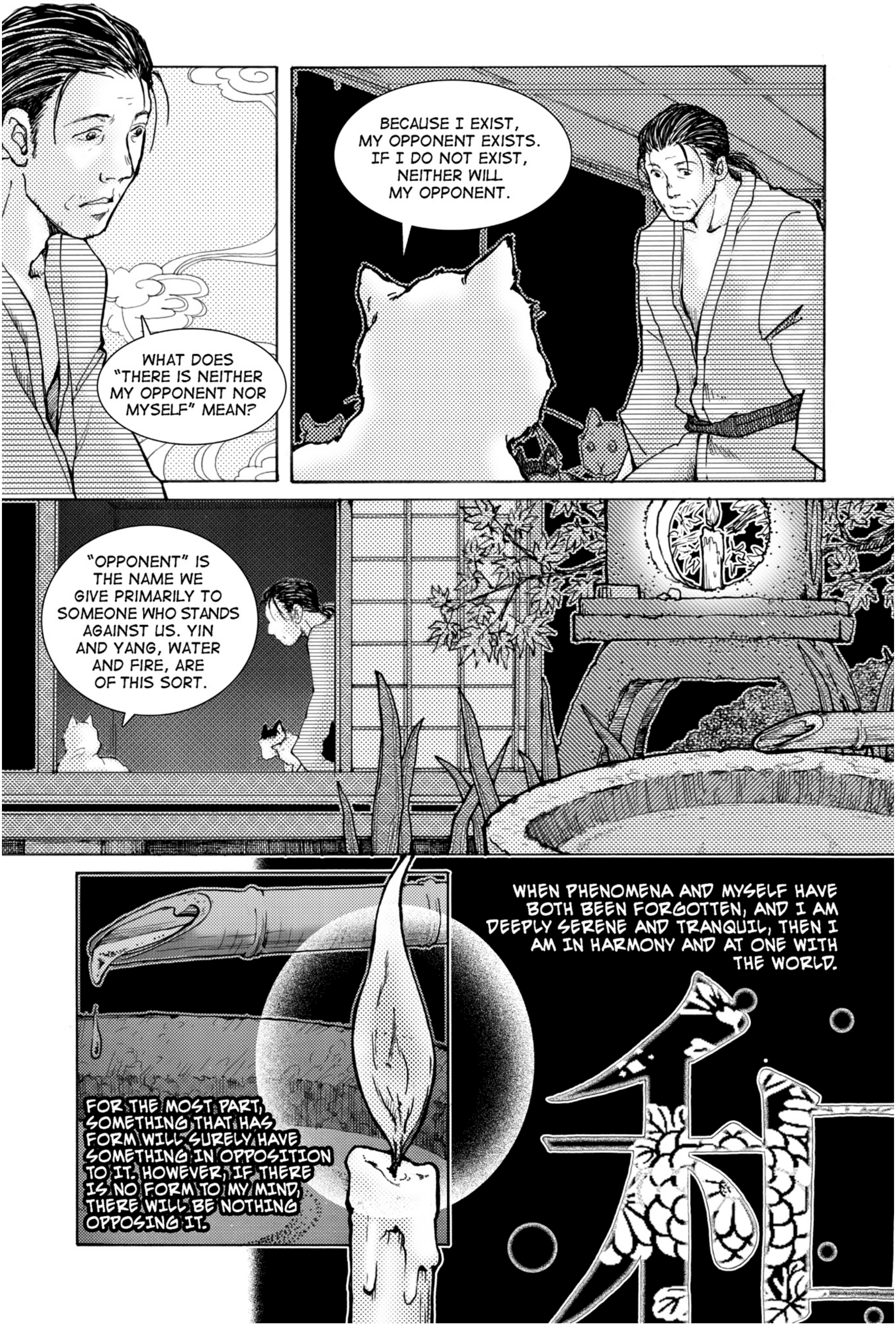

IT WAS NOT THAT IT COULD NOT ANSWER, BUT IT DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
IT WAS AN EXAMPLE OF "THOSE WHO KNOW DON'T SPEAK - THOSE WHO SPEAK DON'T KNOW."
THAT CAT HAD EVEN FORGOTTEN THAT IT HAD FORGOTTEN ITSELF, AND RETURNED TO A STATE OF "NOTHINGNESS."
THE VERY SPIRIT OF THE MARTIAL, IT KILLED NOTHING.
I AM FAR AND AWAY UNABLE EVEN TO APPROACH THAT CAT.

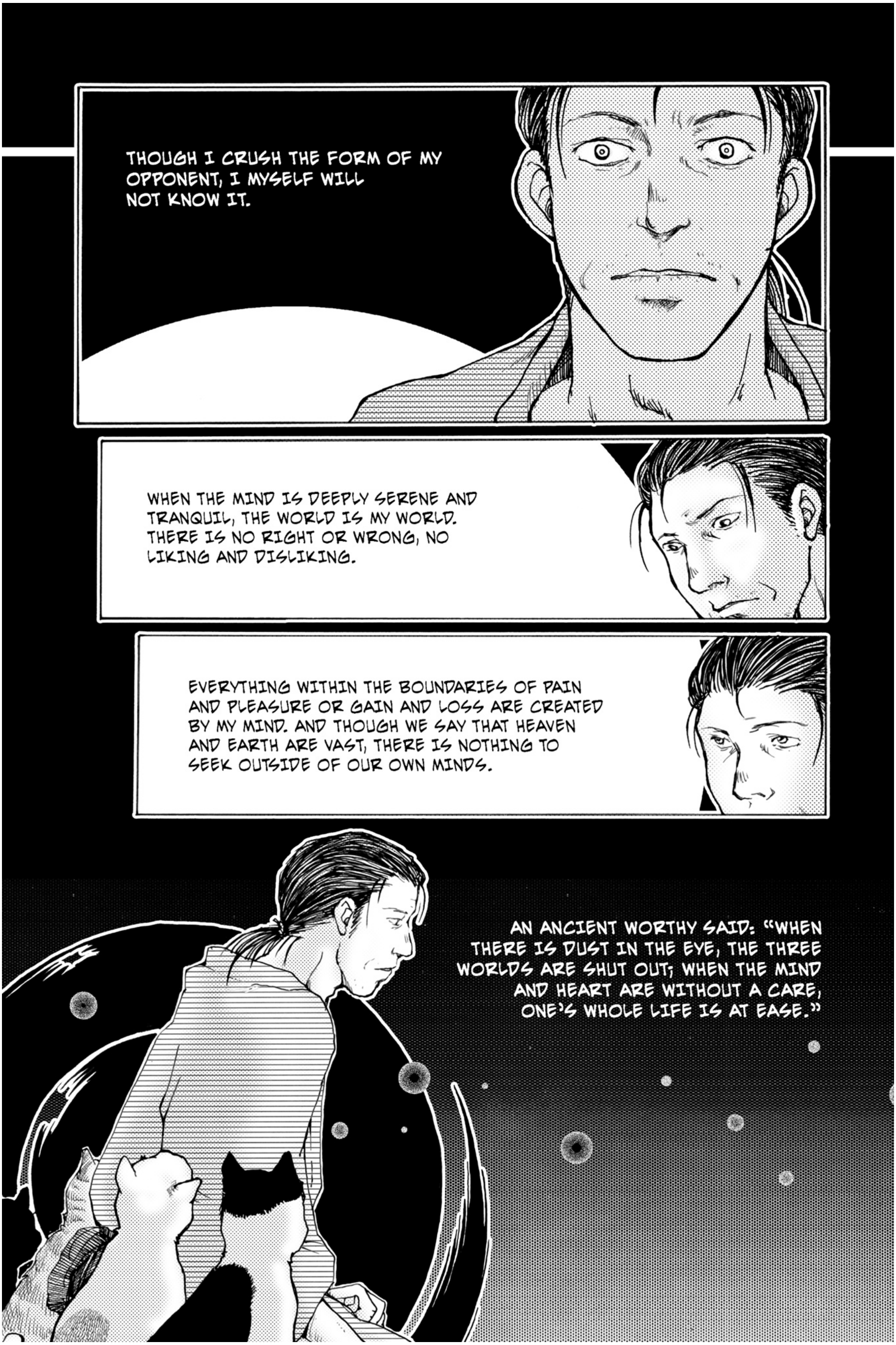

SHOKEN LISTENED TO THIS AS THOUGH IN A DREAM.
I HAVE DISCIPLINED MYSELF IN THE ART OF SWORDMANSHIP FOR A LONG TIME, BUT STILL HAVE NOT REACHED THE SUMMIT OF THE WAY.
TONIGHT, LISTENING TO EACH OF THESE THEORIES, I HAVE ATTAINED THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF MY PATH.
MAY I REQUEST THAT YOU POINT OUT ITS VERY DEEPEST MYSTERIES?

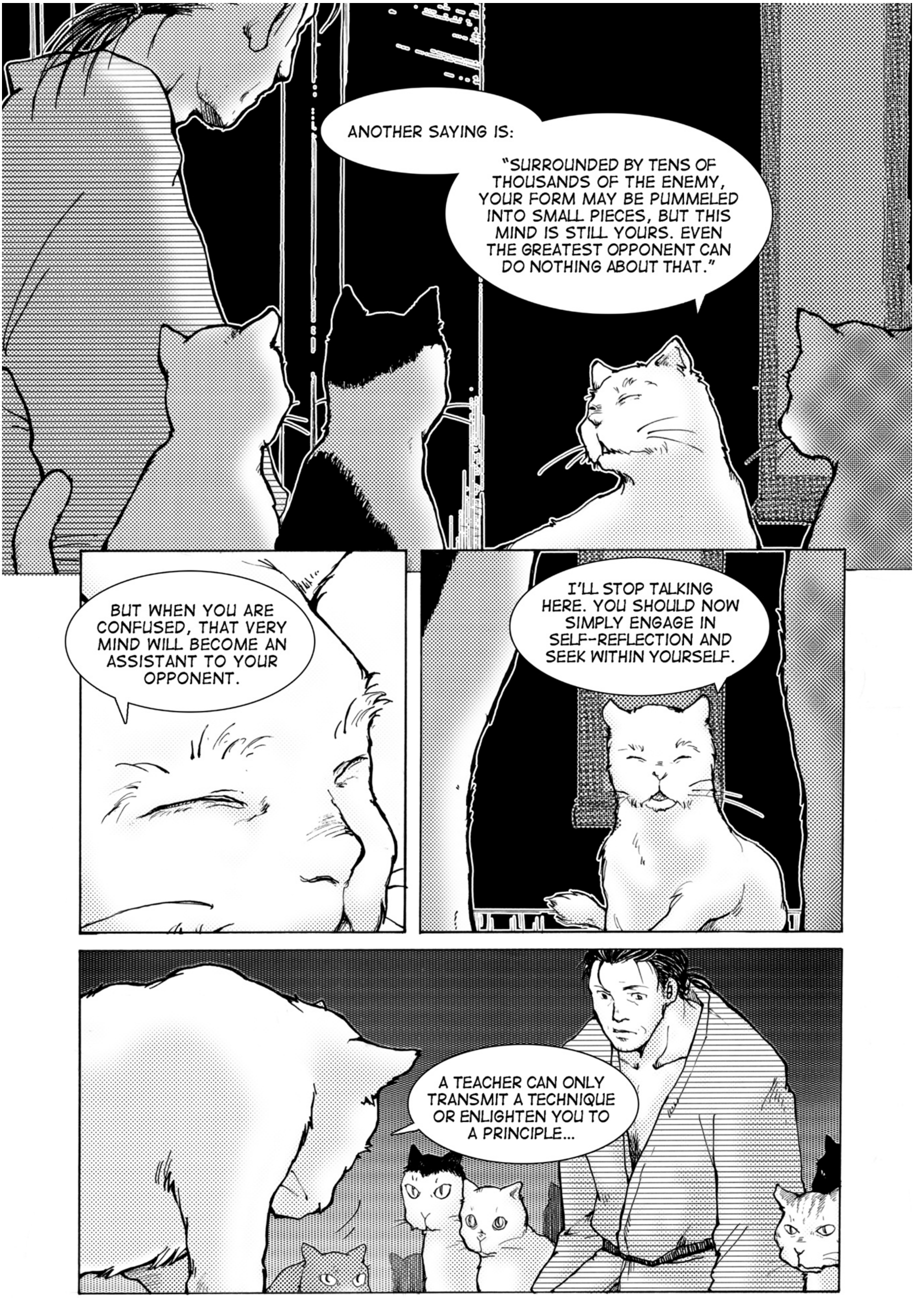

NO, I'M JUST AN ANIMAL. RATS ARE MY MEALS.
WHAT WOULD I HAVE TO DO WITH THE ACTIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS?
STILL, THERE IS SOMETHING I HEARD IN SECRET: THAT THE ART OF SWORDSMANSHIP IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN MAKING EFFORTS TO DEFEAT OTHERS.
IT IS THE ART OF DEALING WITH THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION, AND BEING CLEAR ON THE MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.
A MAN WHO WOULD BE A SAMURAI SHOULD ALWAYS MAINTAIN THIS KIND OF MENTALITY, AND SHOULD DISCIPLINE HIMSELF IN THAT ART.
FOR THIS REASON, YOU SHOULD FIRST OF ALL PENETRATE THE MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH; MAKE NO PARTICULAR ADAPTATIONS TO THE MIND; HAVE NO DOUBTS AND NO VACILLATION; DO NOT USE YOUR OWN WIT, CONTRIVANCES, OR PREJUDICES; HARMONIZE MIND AND CH'I; RELY ON NOTHING; AND BE AS SERENE AS A DEEP POOL.
IF YOU ARE ALWAYS LIKE THIS, YOU WILL BE COMPLETELY FREE TO RESPOND TO ANY CHANGE.

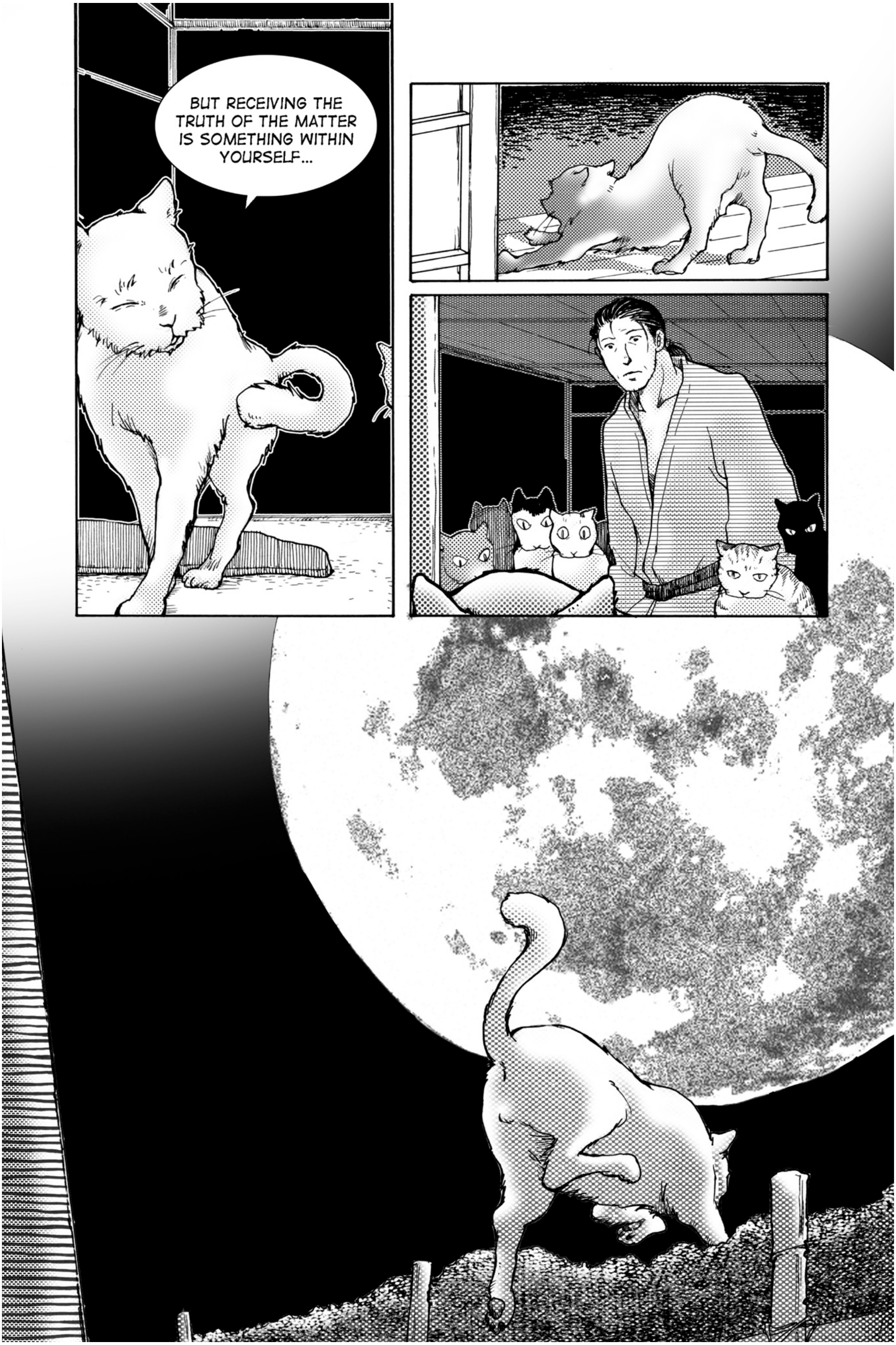

BUT WHEN THE SMALLEST THING ENTERS YOUR MIND, FORM WILL APPEAR. AND WHEN THERE IS FORM, THERE WILL BE AN OPPONENT AND THERE WILL BE YOURSELF.
FACING EACH OTHER, THERE WILL BE CONFLICT; AND IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, THE MYSTERIOUS FUNCTIONS OF CHANGE AND METAMORPHOSIS WILL NOT OCCUR WITH FREEDOM.
FIRST YOUR MIND WILL FALL INTO THOUGHTS OF DEATH AND YOU WILL LOSE ALL CLARITY OF SPIRIT. HOW THEN WILL YOU STAND READILY AND WITH RESOLVE FOR A FIGHT?

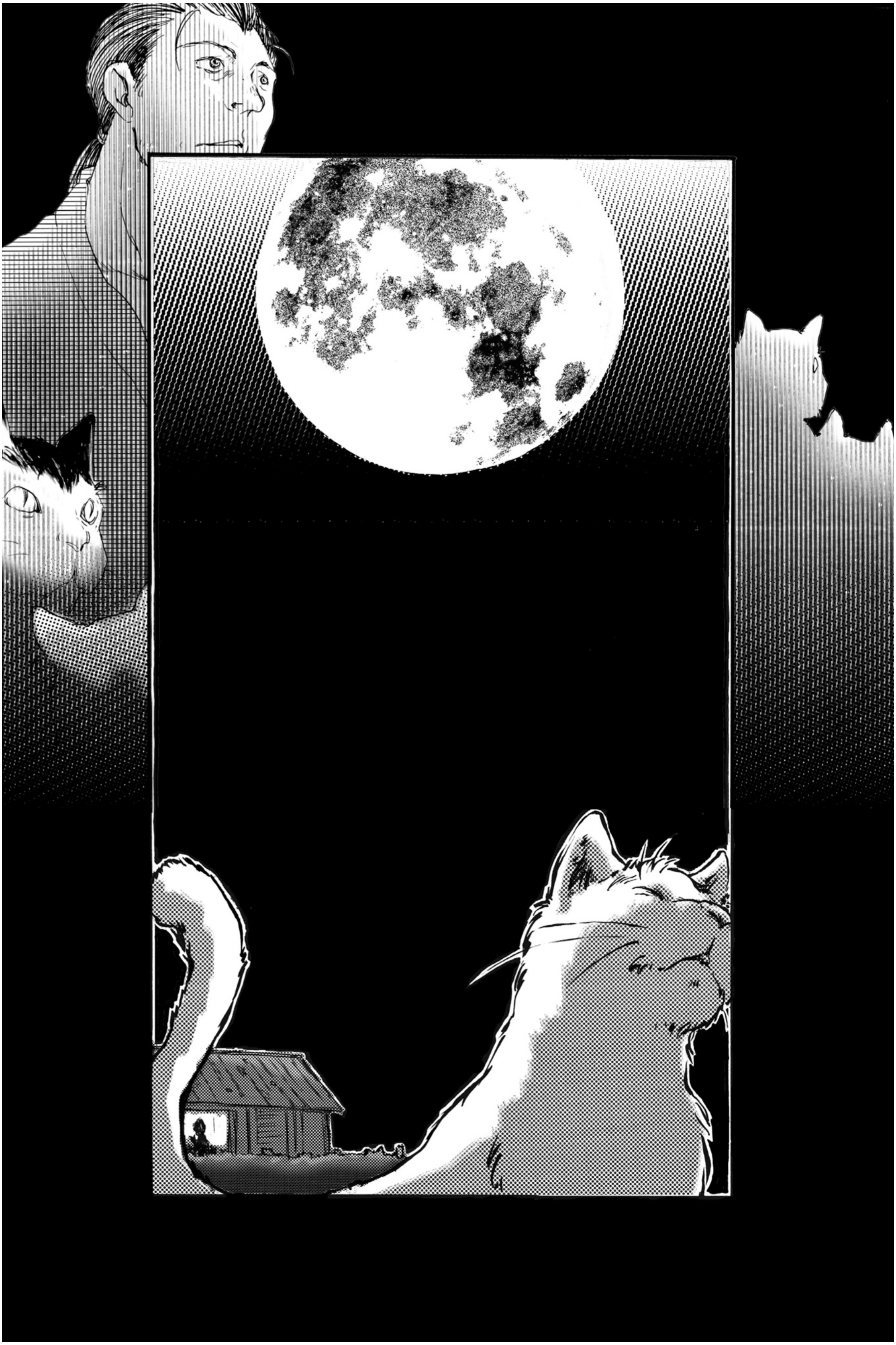

"NOTHINGNESS" IS NOT WHAT YOU WOULD CALL EMPTY-HEADEDNESS. IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE MIND AND HAS NO FORM. ONCE YOU ARE TAKEN BY SOME PHENOMENA, YOUR CH'I WILL BE DRAWN TO IT. THEN YOU BECOME INCAPABLE OF ADAPTABILITY OR OPENESS.
"NOT ONE THING" MEANS NEITHER BEING TAKEN BY NOR DRAWN TOWARD PHENOMENA, THAT THERE IS NEITHER OPPONENT NOR MYSELF.
THAT THERE IS NOTHING MORE THAN FOLLOWING PHENOMENA AS THEY COME, RESPONDING TO THEM AND LEAVING NO TRACES.


WHAT DOES "THERE IS NEITHER MY OPPONENT NOR MYSELF" MEAN?
BECAUSE I EXIST, MY OPPONENT EXISTS. IF I DO NOT EXIST, NEITHER WILL MY OPPONENT.
"OPPONENT" IS THE NAME WE GIVE PRIMARILY TO SOMEONE WHO STANDS AGAINST US. YIN AND YANG, WATER AND FIRE, ARE OF THIS SORT.
FOR THE MOST PART, SOMETHING THAT HAS FORM WILL SURELY HAVE SOMETHING IN OPPOSITION TO IT. HOWEVER, IF THERE IS NO FORM TO MY MIND, THERE WILL BE NOTHING OPPOSING IT.
WHEN PHENOMENA AND MYSELF HAVE BOTH BEEN FORGOTTEN, AND I AM DEEPLY SERENE AND TRANQUIL, THEN I AM IN HARMONY AND AT ONE WITH THE WORLD.
和


THOUGH I CRUSH THE FORM OF MY OPPONENT, I MYSELF WILL NOT KNOW IT.
WHEN THE MIND IS DEEPLY SERENE AND TRANQUIL, THE WORLD IS MY WORLD. THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG, NO LIKING AND DISLIKING.
EVERYTHING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF PAIN AND PLEASURE OR GAIN AND LOSS ARE CREATED BY MY MIND. AND THOUGH WE SAY THAT HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE VAST, THERE IS NOTHING TO SEEK OUTSIDE OF OUR OWN MINDS.
AN ANCIENT WORTHY SAID: “WHEN THERE IS DUST IN THE EYE, THE THREE WORLDS ARE SHUT OUT; WHEN THE MIND AND HEART ARE WITHOUT A CARE, ONE’S WHOLE LIFE IS AT EASE.”

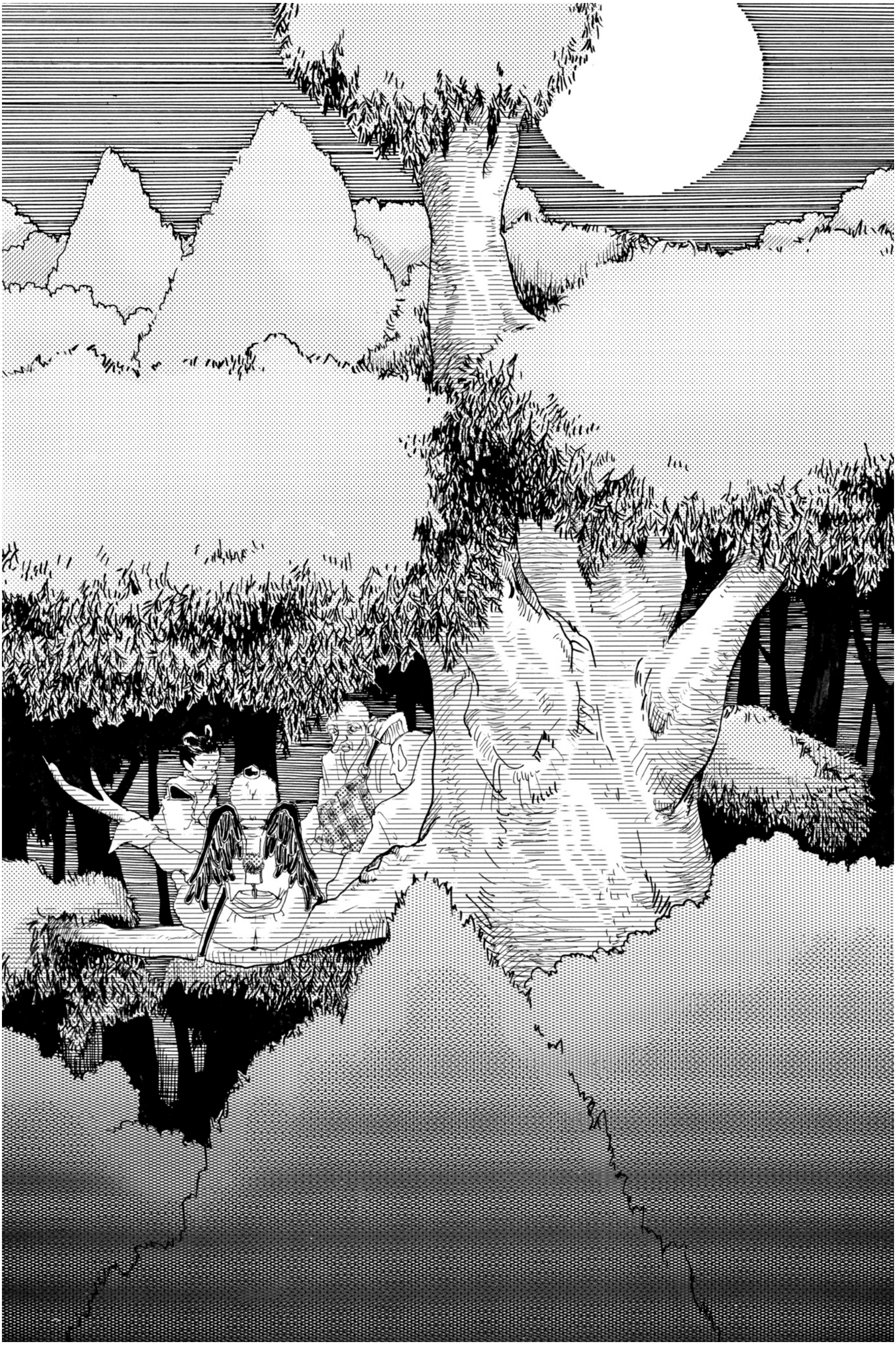

ANOTHER SAYING IS:
"SURROUNDED BY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THE ENEMY, YOUR FORM MAY BE PUMMELED INTO SMALL PIECES, BUT THIS MIND IS STILL YOURS. EVEN THE GREATEST OPPONENT CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT THAT."
BUT WHEN YOU ARE CONFUSED, THAT VERY MIND WILL BECOME AN ASSISTANT TO YOUR OPPONENT.
I'LL STOP TALKING HERE. YOU SHOULD NOW SIMPLY ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION AND SEEK WITHIN YOURSELF.
A TEACHER CAN ONLY TRANSMIT A TECHNIQUE OR ENLIGHTEN YOU TO A PRINCIPLE...

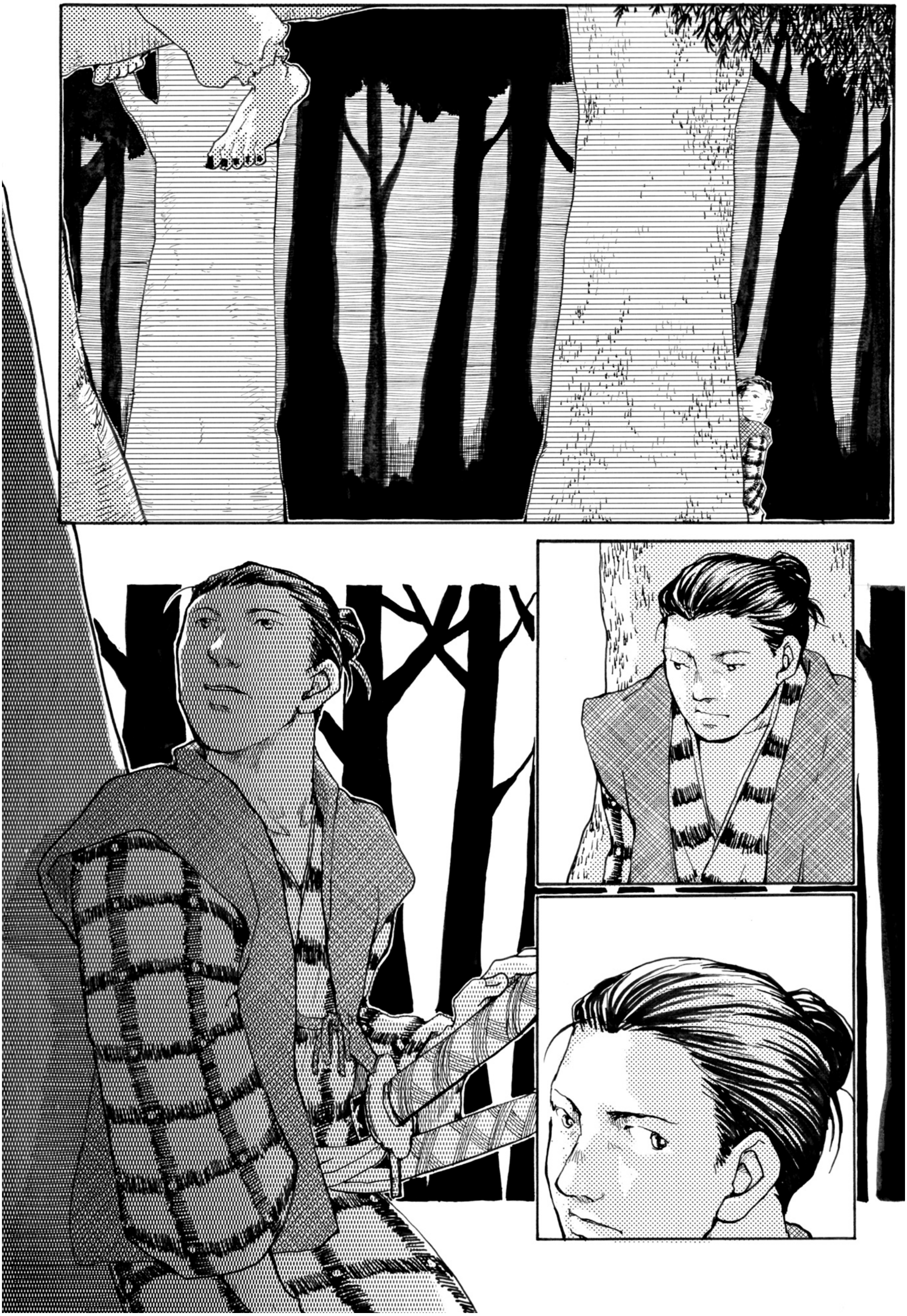

BUT RECEIVING THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS SOMETHING WITHIN YOURSELF...

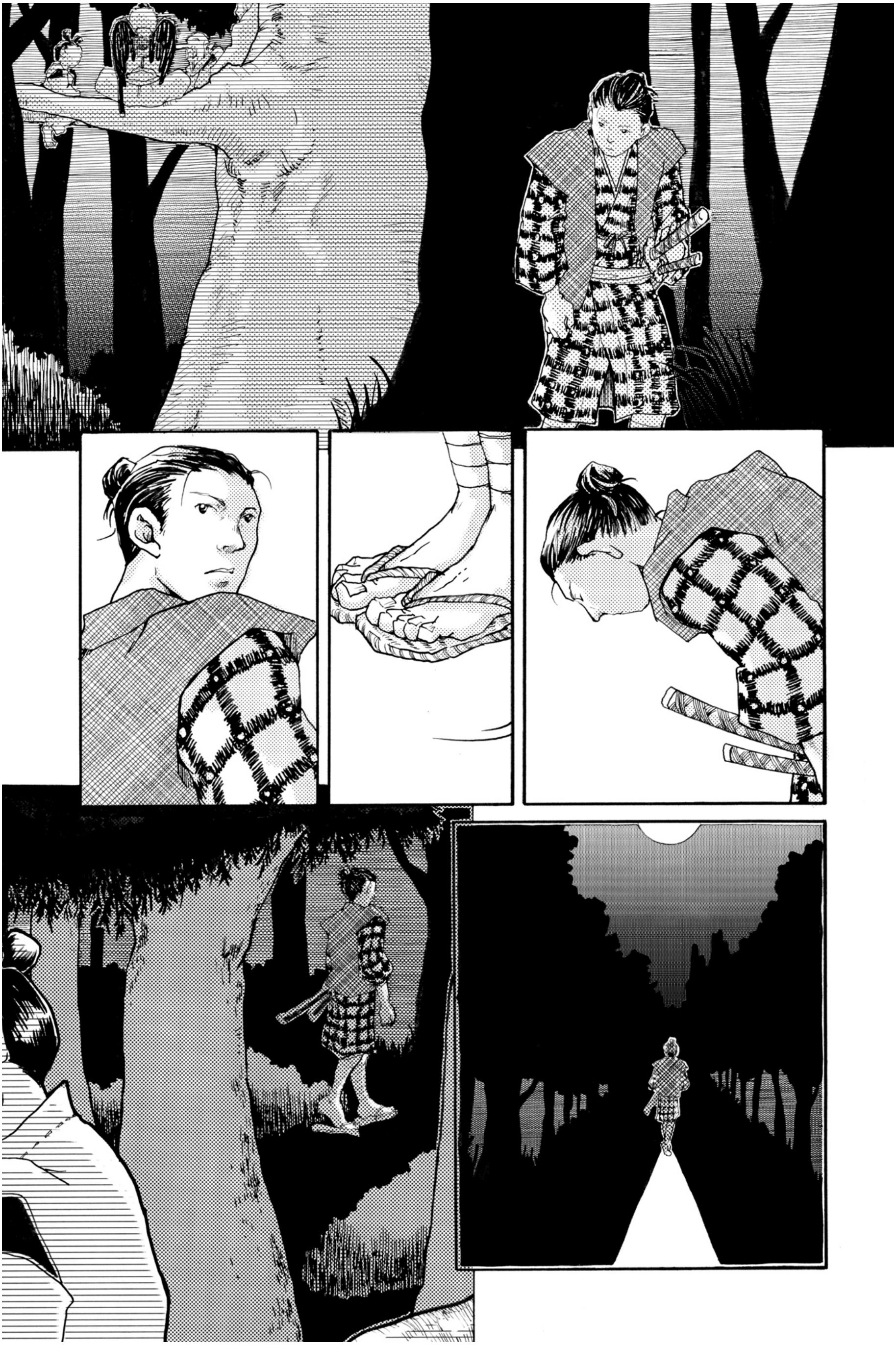


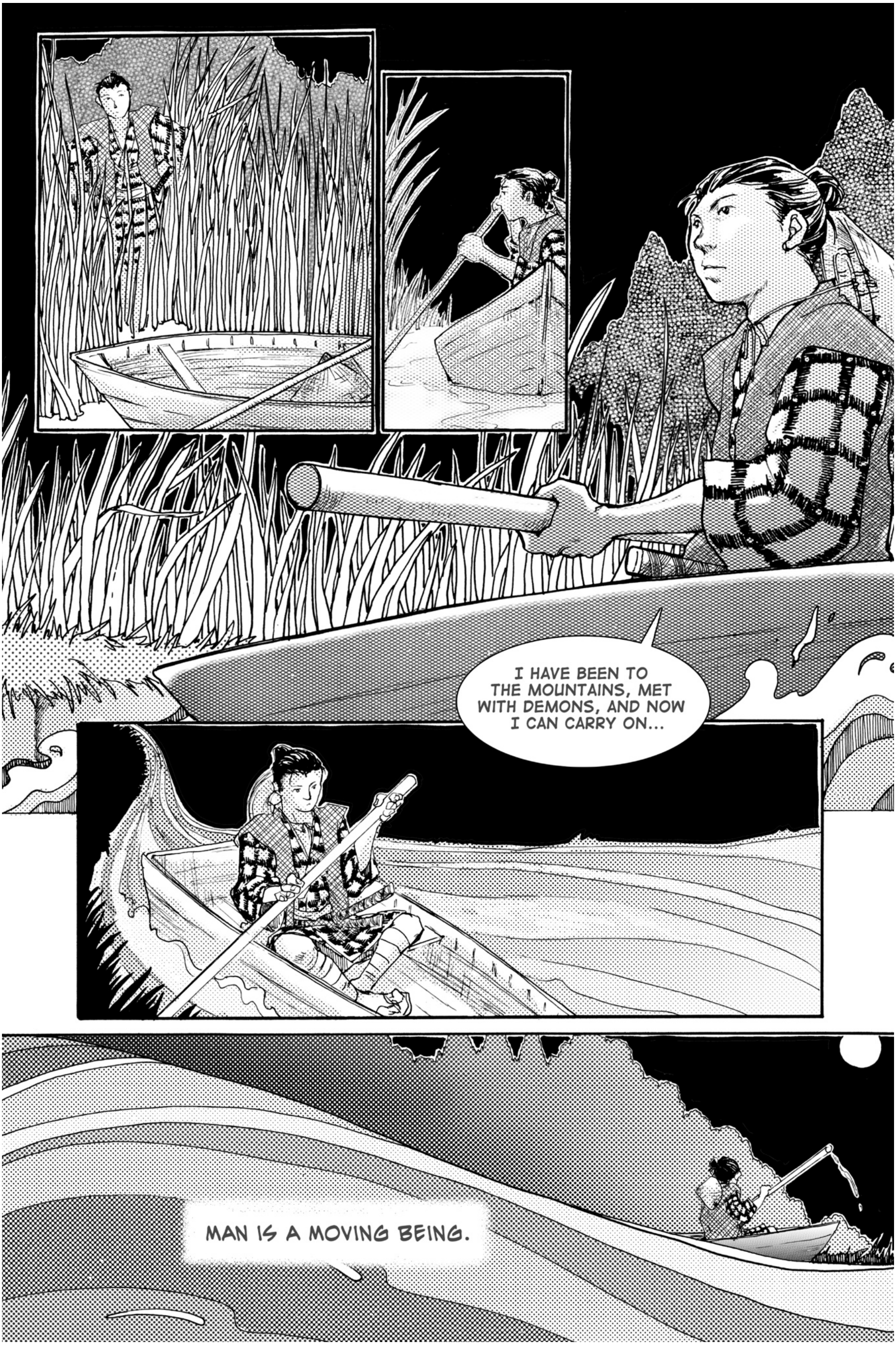
THE DEMON'S SERMON

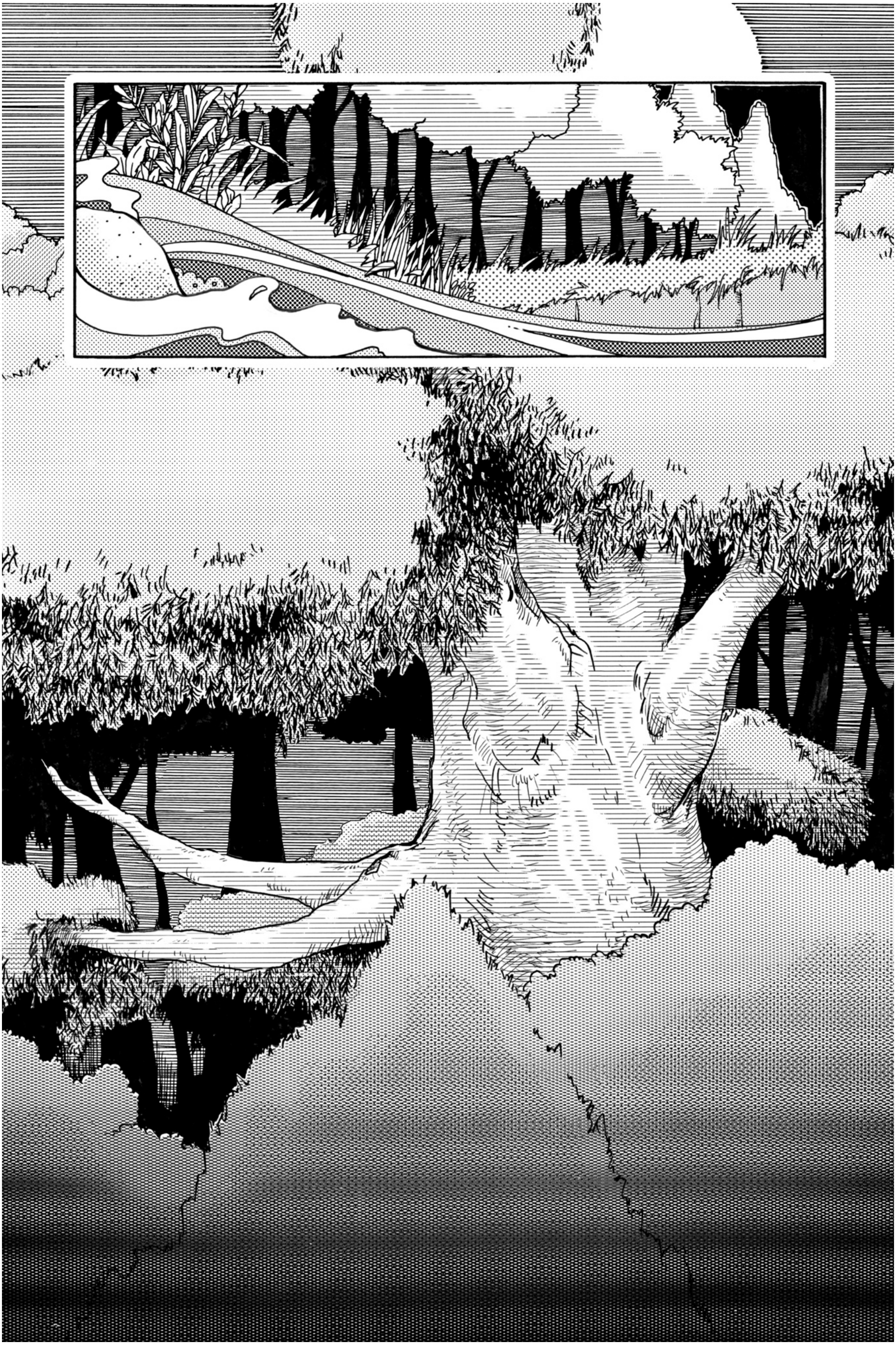
PART 5








I HAVE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAINS, MET WITH DEMONS, AND NOW I CAN CARRY ON...
MAN IS A MOVING BEING.



AFTERWORD

The year was 1173; the time was about midnight. Musashibo Benkei, a rogue priest of the Shugendo sect, stood in the middle of the Gojo Bashi, a wooden bridge that crossed the Kamo River in the middle of Kyoto. A burly man, standing six and a half feet tall, Benkei held a halberd, a weapon consisting of a broad curved blade attached to a long, heavy staff. The combination of his size, strength, and skill with the weapon made him a formidable figure. Benkei had made a vow to defeat a thousand armed men and to take their swords, and as of this night, he had collected nine hundred and ninety-nine. Thus, he was anxious to fulfill his vow within the hour.

Hearing the melody of a flute and approaching footsteps, he moved to the middle of the bridge and took a stand, but was disappointed to see the slight figure of a boy of only fourteen or fifteen years coming his way. Benkei was ready to let him pass when he noticed that the lad was wearing a sword; and while there would be no sport in this, it might be the last opportunity of the night. Moving abruptly forward, Benkei demanded the young warrior's sword, but the teenager, Yoshitsune, ignored his command and walked on by, never missing a note of the tune he was playing.

When he got over his shock at this impudence, Benkei ran after the boy, stood before him again, and repeated his demand for the sword. As Yoshitsune continued to walk on, Benkei became enraged and swung his halberd low at the youngster's feet. Nothing there. The astonished Benkei looked up and saw that Yoshitsune had leapt onto the handrail of the bridge and was still moving away from him. Benkei swung once more, now at Yoshitsune's torso, but missed again. This time Benkei felt the insulting smack of Yoshitsune's bamboo flute across the back of his neck. Livid, Benkei lashed out vainly, over and over, landing no blows but feeling thumps and whacks about his face, neck, and midsection.

Perhaps because it was dark, or perhaps because he was so angry, Benkei didn't see that Yoshitsune was not alone. Surrounding the young man were six or seven strange creatures—some half-human, half-bird, some eerie-looking men with long noses—armed with Buddhist implements: ringed staffs, heavy bells, ritual ropes, and double vajras. Were these demons beating Benkei? Or was Yoshitsune himself trouncing Benkei—and was the vision of the creatures just a manifestation of the boy's skills?

Benkei, panting and begging for mercy, had no way of knowing that Yoshitsune had spent his youth in exile in a temple on Mt. Kurama, by night learning the secrets of the martial arts from these otherworldly beings known as *tengu.*

TENGU

The first recorded sighting of a tengu in Japan was in 637 C.E., when a comet moved across the sky from east to west, accompanied by a sound like thunder. The emperor and all his subjects were frightened by this phenomenon, thinking that it portended evil; a scholar who had spent time in China assured them that it was not a meteor or a falling star but a tengu, whose barking voice sounded like thunder. What a tengu was, no one was quite sure; the kanji meant "heavenly dog," while the dictionary at the time defined it as an *amatsukitsune*, or "heavenly fox."

For some time thereafter, tengu seemed to be satisfied living their lives as formless spirits of the mountains, trees, and rocks, and they made their presence known by loud sounds and echoes in the depths of the mountains or dark forests. People came to blame tengu for strange occurrences: sudden strong winds, freak fires, or snow falling off branches onto travelers' heads when there was no breeze.

Eventually tengu took the shape of winged men with the heads of kites. The semantic confusion associating tengu with foxes—which are considered in Japan to be a shape-shifters and pranksters—is understandable; an old Japanese saying holds that "foxes do not find the actions of tengu strange in the least." For sport, tengu would possess men and women, making them behave strangely and worry their neighbors. At their worst, tengu would kidnap Buddhist priests or children, who, when finally returned home, were never quite the same.

After a time, some tengu evolved into a more humanoid form, with very long noses indicating their enormous pride. They loved nothing more than confounding arrogant Zen priests with their own arguments, and defeating swordsmen who took unfair advantage of others. Some of these tengu, known as *konoha* tengu, became protectors of Buddhism, and took it upon themselves to reward good and punish evil. It was these creatures who are said to have taught their hidden traditions of swordsmanship to Yoshitsune, and more recently, revealed the secrets of aikido to Ueshiba Morihei on Mt. Kurama, the dark and forbidding mountain just outside the ancient capital of Kyoto.

. . . . .

Mountains, the tengu's habitat, have always been considered holy (and a little spooky) by the Japanese. The early Japanese buried their dead on mountains and went there to communicate with the spirit world. Seekers after the Way still go the mountains to meditate and practice esoteric religious rites. Mountains themselves are considered to be living entities that possess great energy, and numerous sects today—blends of native Shinto animism, ancient mountain religions, and Buddhism—worship specific mountains not as proxies for the gods but as gods themselves.

Thus, both the mountains and the tengu inhabit a sort of twilight zone between this world and the other, a dual existence, at once spiritual and earthbound. It is to this liminal world that the swordsman must go to learn the deepest secrets of his art.

THE BOOK

There is a rhythm that the Japanese believe underlies everything in nature. This is *jo*, *ha*, *kyu*: *jo* (序), a slow, simple and straightforward introduction; *ha* (破), a development or breaking up of the previous action into more complexity; and *kyu* (急), a quickening of the rhythm leading to the climax. Zeami, the father of Noh drama, wrote about this rhythm in this way:

> When you think this over well in a tranquil state of mind, you will see that all phenomena in their innumerable forms—good or bad, great and small, sentient and insentient—are, each and every one, endowed with *jo*, *ha*, and *kyu*. From the twittering of the birds to the cries of insects, each sings with that principle with which it is provided, and that is *jo*, *ha*, and *kyu*. . . . This [rhythm] is also in the voice of the wind and the sound of water.

Jo, *ha*, *kyu* is the fundamental rhythm of the universe, and the rhythm with which every art—Noh, poetry, tea ceremony, the martial arts—aims to be in accord. In Noh, for example, it is applied to the rhythm of both the chant and the music, and to the sequential order of the plays. In the martial arts, the famous swordsman Yagyu Mitsuyoshi noted that *jo* is described as the combat before the attack, *ha* as the attack itself, and *kyu* as the responding blow of each combatant.

Issai Chozanshi (1659–1741), the author of *The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts*, was a samurai of the Sekiyado fief in the ancient province of Shimosa. From his writings, we can infer that he belonged to the class of artists and writers known as *bunjin* (文人), or literati. Such men and women generally shied away from public life, preferring to spend their time studying the various martial and nonmartial arts, reading, talking, and sharing a cup of sake with friends. Although Chozanshi denies with typical Japanese humility any real knowledge of swordsmanship, he writes in his afterword:

> I've loved the art [of swordsmanship] since I was twenty, and was influenced by martial artists. I asked about the benefits of its techniques, experimented with the transformation of ch'i, and remedied its ailments. I was someone who heard about principle and then sought to prove it to myself with technique of the mind. If from time to time I came to a secret understanding without speaking, I would write it down.

In this work, the *jo*, or introduction, corresponds to the selection of short, fanciful stories from Chozanshi's *The Hayseed Taoist*, advocating a way of nonattachment and psychological clarity for dealing with the world and its contentions. The topics of these stories range from the essential simplicity of life and death, and one's relation to the phenomena of the world, to the nature of movement and skill, and the elimination of desires that obscure our vision. Together, these stories offer us the transformative insight with which to approach the problems of hostility and conflict.

The *ha*, or more complex development, is articulated in "The Demon's Sermon." This central story, which can be broken down into a number of discrete selections, applies the values learned in *The Hayseed Taoist* stories to the martial arts. "The Demon's Sermon" emphasizes the importance of the primordial essence of mind and the development and function of ch'i (the energy that flows through all matter). An understanding of this material and spiritual force and how it affects the world and the individual is of vital interest to the martial artist and anyone else who desires to be effective in life. Chozanshi playfully leads the reader through questions and answers between several tengu on subjects such as yin and yang, nature as spontaneity and of-itself-so, acting without taking action, and doing with our everyday mind. Ch'i moves like a current through all of these subjects.

Finally, for the *kyu*, the whole matter is summed up concisely in the parable of "The Mysterious Technique of the Cat." This is the story of a seemingly undefeatable rat that is finally brought down by a toothless old cat, after a number of other famous mousers have failed at catching him. When the other cats ask the old master how he was able to beat the rat, seemingly without effort, he discourages them from relying on their dexterity, technique, or speed. The successful mouser (and martial artist), he teaches, follows the nature of the universe, moving effortlessly with transformation and change. Keeping his mind uncluttered by theories, set notions, or prejudices, his actions will be contingent only on what he encounters. In this way, he will accomplish everything according to the moment—and with complete freedom.

▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪

The study of swordsmanship—or any martial art—may lead the practitioner to some unexpected places. He begins working out at the dojo, practicing the forms week after week, trying to understand them and commit them to muscle memory. Later, he may continue his practice in spare hours. Eventually, if he persists for a number of years, the body and mind find a degree of coordination, and he becomes proficient in his style.

If he practices his style as a Way, however, rather than as a method of self-defense or an art, he may find himself in different territory, requiring a different point of view.

In *The Demon's Sermon on the Martial Arts*, Chozanshi takes us to such a place. Here, demons lecture on the value of ch'i, the importance of following one's own nature, the attainment of No-Mind, and, ultimately, the ability to rely on nothing. In this world, butterflies and sparrows discuss the matter of natural transformation, owls hold forth on being satisfied with one's talents, seagulls and mayflies converse about the Tao, and toads and rats elucidate the Way of the gods. This may seem like a long way from the dojo, but these creatures have been there all along. Like Benkei, we have just been unaware of them.

Now, thanks to the wonderful imagination and craft of the writer Sean Michael Wilson, and the extraordinary skill and creativity of artist Michiru Morikawa, this manga version of Chozanshi's work provides us with a fresh interpretation of the author's insights into the martial arts and a less stressful Way of life. A deep bow of thanks is due to Beth Frankl and the entire editorial department at Shambhala Publications for recommending and supporting this project. While the names of the writer, artist, and translator appear prominently in the credits, we are also profoundly grateful to all the unsung heroes who have worked so hard to make this book a reality.

WILLIAM SCOTT WILSON
MARCH 2012

Sign up

O